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### Causes and cures of unauthorized absenteeism in the Navy

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CAUSES AND CURES OF UNAUTHORIZED ABSENTEEISM  
IN THE NAVY

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE LELAND STANFORD  
JUNIOR UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF  
MASTER OF ARTS  
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

By

①  
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[June 1950]

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

#### The Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the causes of unauthorized absenteeism among the enlisted personnel of the postwar U. S. Navy, and, on the basis of these findings, to determine some measures which appeared to be effective in reducing absenteeism. This involved three major problems:

1. To determine what types of enlisted men committed unauthorized absence offenses and why they committed them.
2. To examine the underlying reasons for absenteeism from psychiatric and sociological viewpoints.
3. To determine and present certain measures which seemed to be of value in combatting unauthorized absenteeism.

#### Need for the Study

The seriousness of unauthorized absenteeism from the Navy from the standpoint of manpower is indicated by the fact that, during the calendar year of 1949, 38,321 court-martial cases having this offense as the principal charge were reviewed by the Navy Department. Moreover, courts-martial for unauthorized absenteeism accounted for 74.5 percent of all cases reviewed during that year. The average enlisted strength

of the Navy during that period was 375,025.<sup>a</sup> When the number of courts-martial for unauthorized absenteeism is compared with the average strength of the Navy, it becomes evident that during 1949 almost one man in ten in the entire Navy was tried for this offense alone.<sup>b</sup> In addition, an undetermined but doubtless much larger group of unauthorized absence offenses of lesser seriousness than those tried before courts-martial were committed during the year but were punished without resort to courts-martial. The direct loss of Navy manpower during the period of the offender's actual absence alone would have totaled a formidable number of man-years. When to this is added the indirect loss of the offender's services during arrest, trial and punishment, and the time which must have been devoted to his case by various officers and clerical personnel, the total becomes truly staggering.

It is evident, therefore, that the problem of unauthorized absenteeism is of a sufficiently serious nature to merit very serious study, for any practicable measures of reducing absentee rates will automatically result in a substantial saving of manpower.

#### Delimitations

This study was limited to a non-psychiatric evaluation

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- a. Data on number of courts-martial and average strength of the Navy are taken from official records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel.
- b. This ratio assumes no "repeaters", and is therefore not strictly accurate.

of the less serious kind of unauthorized absence offenses occurring at a number of ships and stations during the period 15 January to 15 February 1950. Offenses involving absence of less than twelve hours' duration were not included because so many of these involved tardiness rather than absenteeism and were caused by inadvertence or carelessness. On the other hand, absences exceeding thirty days' duration classed the offender, technically speaking, as a deserter, and previous case studies have already been made of such offenders serving sentences at naval prisons.

This study was limited to a relatively small but nevertheless fairly representative group of naval activities, and covered only a one-month period.

It was not practicable to search the pre-naval history of the offender to determine his family or environmental background, nor were any psychiatric evaluations of offenders made.

The discussion of cures for unauthorized absenteeism was limited to certain factors and techniques which appeared to have a strong and direct bearing upon the problem. It was recognised that such broad concepts as strong motivation, good leadership and high morale were definitely related to absenteeism, yet it was considered unnecessary, for the purpose of this study, to discuss fully each of these factors upon which entire books have been written. There is no intent, however, to minimize their importance.

#### Definitions

The term "unauthorized absenteeism" as used in this

study connotes the general offense of overstaying leave or liberty, or of taking unauthorized leave or liberty. The keynote of the offense is unauthorized absence from military or naval jurisdiction.

"A.W.O.L.," has a different meaning in the Navy than in the Army. In the Navy this connotes "jumping ship"; i.e., leaving the ship or station without authority. The Army defines A.W.O.L. more broadly to include overstaying one's leave or pass in addition to the offense of leaving one's station without authority.

"Liberty," as used in the Navy, means authorized absence from duty station on an overnight or week-end basis, for which formal leave is not required. By definition it does not exceed seventy-two hours' duration.

"Leave" means authorized absence from duty station requiring formal leave papers. The amount of leave is debited against the man's leave account under the Armed Forces Leave Act. It is synonymous to the Army term of "furlough."

The term "A.O.L.", or "being overleave," as used in the Navy, involves overstaying an authorized leave or liberty but not the offense of leaving duty station without authority (A.W.O.L.).

"G.O.T." refers to the Navy's General Classification Test battery. Mean is 50; standard deviation 10.

"A.G.C.T." — Army General Classification Test. Mean is 100; standard deviation 20.

"Mast." An enlisted man is "brought to mast" for the purpose of receiving an official hearing before his Commanding

Officer for any alleged misconduct. Upon satisfying himself of the offender's guilt, the Commanding Officer may award certain authorized punishment "at mast", or he may direct that the offender be brought to trial before a summary court-martial or deck court. "Mast" is roughly equivalent to a hearing before a magistrate in civil jurisprudence.

A "Deck Court" (D.C.) is a form of court-martial consisting of one officer. Its jurisdiction is limited to offenses of minor natures, and it may award punishment not exceeding twenty days' confinement and/or twenty days' loss of pay.

A "Summary Court-Martial" (S.C.M.) consists of three members and a prosecutor. It may adjudge a bad-conduct discharge of an enlisted man, or his confinement and/or loss of pay not exceeding three months.

A "General Court-Martial" (G.C.M.) is the highest tribunal of naval justice, and may be convened only by flag officers so empowered by the Secretary of the Navy. Deserter cases are invariably tried before General Courts-Martial.

"Broken Service Enlistment". An enlisted man with prior naval service who reenlists more than ninety days after the termination of his prior enlistment is said to enlist under "broken service" conditions. Enlistment within ninety days is considered "continuous service" for purposes of this study.

## CHAPTER II

### PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Locke, Cornsweet, Bromberg and Apuzzo<sup>1</sup> in 1944, made a study of 1063 naval offenders undergoing disciplinary action at the U. S. Naval Receiving Station Disciplinary Barracks, Hart's Island, New York. It was found that 94 percent, or exactly one thousand of the total admissions were for unauthorized absenteeism. The following factors were analyzed: duration of offense; previous naval and civil offenses; surface reason for offense; age, education, intelligence, race, and marital status of offender; nativity of parents; psychiatric findings; length of service of offender prior to first offense; and school delinquencies. The authors concluded that the reason given by the men for going overleave varied greatly from the true psychological motivation; that only 21.9 percent showed definite neuropsychiatric disorders; and that truancy in school seemed to have a positive relationship to absenteeism in the Navy. The general conclusion was advanced that a longer period of recruit training, screening after first test of active wartime service, and a program of re-education to develop maturity might reduce unauthorized

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1. B. Locke, A. C. Cornsweet, W. Bromberg, and A. A. Apuzzo, "Study of 1063 Naval Offenders." U. S. Navy Medical Bulletin, 44: 73-86, January, 1945.

absence from the Navy.

In later research based upon the same information summarized above, Bromberg, Apuzzo and Locke<sup>1</sup> in 1945 undertook an investigation into the psychiatric aspects of desertion and overleave. They found that the great majority of men went overleave for one of two reasons. First was the presence of an emotional conflict which was displaced onto the Navy. The second was the evoking of underlying antagonism toward authority by regulations and discipline. They also observed that emotional immaturity which dips into marked passive dependence on parents and home was present in nearly all cases of absenteeism among the younger men. It was concluded that longer basic training and indoctrination was the only immediate measure in wartime that would modify the noticeable dependence needs of most recruits.

Otness and Stouffer<sup>2</sup> in 1945 made a study of 1500 naval offenders admitted to the disciplinary barracks of the U. S. Naval Receiving Station, Norfolk, Virginia. In addition to compiling certain general data concerning the offender and his background, an attempt was made to discover the offender's attitudes toward the Navy. They concluded that the methods which worked well in peacetime in adjusting the recruit

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1. W. Bromberg, A. A. Apuzzo, B. Locke, "Psychologic Study of Desertion and Overleave in the Navy." U. S. Navy Medical Bulletin, 44: 558-568, March, 1945.
2. H. R. Otness and G. A. W. Stouffer, Jr., "Naval Offender; Motivating Factors." U. S. Navy Medical Bulletin, 44: 1029-1035, May, 1945.

to life in the service were largely inappropriate in wartime, when lowered standards of admission brought many poorly-adjusted men, psychologically and sociologically speaking, into the service. They stressed the conclusion that many of the delinquents in the Navy had a definite history of poor environmental adjustment in childhood, and that the Navy, as a father substitute to these young men, had a difficult responsibility toward their adjustment to life in general and to the service in particular.

Boakes,<sup>1</sup> during a post-war tour of duty as a psychiatrist at the Naval Disciplinary Barracks, Yerba Buena Island, San Francisco, made a study of over two thousand men who were serving sentences for various military offenses, the great majority of which were concerned with unauthorized absenteeism. Each man was given a complete neuropsychiatric examination. 77.4 percent were diagnosed as having no mental disease, while the remainder showed definite symptoms of non-psychiatric disorders. The most prevalent disorders found were constitutional psychopathic inferiority and psychonarcoses (all types). Chronic alcoholism accounted for less than one percent of all cases. Boakes concluded that the Navy should make every effort to separate, administratively, those offenders suffering from psychiatric disorders provided that their actions had not involved criminality, because punishment

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1. L. D. Boakes, "Psychiatric Evaluation of the Naval Delinquent," U. S. Navy Medical Bulletin, 47: 450-472, May-June, 1947.

was largely ineffective for such men. For these men having no history of psychiatric disorders, it was believed that in a careful study of psychodynamics of the personality of the delinquent would be found the basis for his reeducation and reorientation to life in the service.

In an attempt to determine whether naval delinquency could be predicted from the Naval Personal Inventory, Locke and Cornsweet<sup>1</sup> administered this test to an unselected group of 1239 naval prisoners at the Disciplinary Barracks, Hart's Island, New York. It was found that although this test did not serve as an aid in predicting the number of naval offenses committed by any group, it was of value in screening for further examination those men having positive psychiatric diagnoses. Statistically reliable differences were found between white and negro personnel in both portions of the scale.

In conducting an official survey of the attitudes toward naval justice of 500 prisoners confined in naval prisons and disciplinary barracks, White<sup>2</sup> in 1946 included in his report to the Secretary of the Navy some factual and statistical information concerning unauthorized absenteeism. He reported, on the basis of official records of the Navy Department that 607,006 courts-martial were conducted during the forty-five

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1. B. Locke and A. C. Cornsweet, "The Naval Personal Inventory and the Naval Offender," U. S. Navy Medical Bulletin, 49: 289-295, March-April, 1949.
2. Robert J. White, Commo. (ChC) U.S.N. "A Study of Five Hundred Naval Prisoners and Naval Justice." Special Report to the Secretary of the Navy, 1946.

months of World War II, and that about three-quarters of all offenses, or about 450,000 cases, had their genesis in unauthorized absence. The aggregate personnel of the Navy and Marine Corps during the war was reported as 4,758,215. He considered the seemingly high ratio of courts-martial to total number of personnel to be misleading because it did not take into account the high percentage of recidivists, or "repeaters." In analyzing the offender, White found that the most frequent age was nineteen, that 60 percent were under twenty-one, and that the average level schooling was 9.3 grades. He found that well over 85 percent of some large cross-section groups revealed a background of homes broken by divorce, drunkenness, death, or desertion. Concerning the reasons for men deserting or going overleave, he concluded that the great majority had no better reason for their conduct than a total feeling of indifference toward their patriotic duty or personal honor. Wholesome home environment and better training in the home appeared to him to be the most effective means of combatting delinquency of the sort which was manifest among naval prisoners.

Bast<sup>1</sup>, in connection with his duties as Chaplain at the Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia, made a statistical

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1. Charles H. Bast, LtCdr. (ChC) U.S.N. "Statistical Data on Discipline at Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia." Unpublished report to the Bureau of Naval Personnel, 1949.

study of all disciplinary cases arising at that station during the period of 11 January to 31 July 1949. Thirty percent of all cases, which included some very minor breaches of discipline, concerned unauthorized absence, and this was the most prevalent of all offenses. He found some correlation between G.C.T. score and discipline, in that men having low G.C.T. scores were more likely to appear at "mast," and that nearly one-half of all men on the station having very low scores (below 35) had so appeared. He found little or no correlation, however, between G.C.T. score and overleave offenders at that station.

In his research in applied psychology in the Navy, McDowell<sup>1</sup> emphasized the role of both the doctor and the chaplain in combatting unauthorized absenteeism. He advanced the view that, because absence offenses, when committed by maladjusted individuals, usually give no indication of the underlying cause, intelligently applied therapy rather than stern punishment appeared to be the more effective means of handling such cases.

Because of the seriousness of the unauthorized absence problem in the Army during the war and its costly consequences upon the effective strength of units, the War

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1. P. E. McDowell, Capt. U.S.N. "Research in Applied Psychology, Selection and Training of Personnel Ashore and Afloat in the Navy." Unpublished report to the Navy Dept. 1948.

Department in 1944 published to the service a pamphlet<sup>1</sup> based on careful studies of Army personnel who had committed offenses of this nature. This pamphlet studied the problem from the viewpoint of the personal characteristics which distinguished A.W.O.L.'s from other soldiers and pointed out the most usual reasons given by absentees for their conduct. In its conclusions this manual suggested some time-tried ways in which commanders might reduce the A.W.O.L. rates in their units.

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1. Absence Without Leave; War Dept. Pamphlet No. 20-5.  
3 March 1944.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD OF CONDUCTING THE STUDY

The data used in this study were derived from two principal sources:

1. Previous related studies conducted within the Armed Services during and immediately after World War II.
2. Case histories of unauthorized absence offenses occurring on selected ships and naval stations during January and February, 1950.

It would have been desirable, from the standpoint of statistical reliability, to have obtained a much larger number of case histories, both by conducting the survey over a period of at least six months and preferably one year, and by including a much larger and therefore more representative sample of naval activities. Neither the time nor the facilities, however, were available to conduct so extensive a survey. Moreover, because this study was of an unofficial character, it was necessary to draw the case history data principally from commands which were in close proximity and whose personnel records were therefore readily available for reference. To avoid possible bias which might result from sampling a number of geographically-concentrated activities, other ships and stations, in-

cluding two on the East Coast, were included. These were selected primarily from the standpoint of personal association with and voluntary participation by the Commanding Officer, although size and representativeness were given careful consideration.

The following activities were selected to participate:

A major Receiving Station	West Coast
Two large Naval Air Stations	West Coast
Three Aircraft Squadrons	West Coast
A major combatant ship	Atlantic Fleet
Seven destroyers	Pacific Fleet
A Naval Barracks	East Coast

These activities had a combined population of over ten thousand men. A total of 122 case histories were obtained during the month's period.

The purpose of the case histories was to obtain a recent and representative sample of absence offenses occurring within these commands. Because there was neither time nor opportunity to interview each offender, the case histories were limited to factual information from the offender's service record and to an evaluation of each case by an immediate superior of the offender. Only those absence offenses which were of greater duration than twelve hours but less than thirty days were included. A sample of the questionnaire will be found in Appendix "A."

The second source of information, namely, previous related studies and surveys, was employed to provide additional data on absenteeism from the viewpoint of the naval prisoner who was serving a court-martial sentence for such an offense. Some of these studies provided the background material for the psychiatric explanations of absenteeism; others provided information on the offender's attitudes toward the service. Studies by two chaplains provided some information on the sociological aspects of the problem.

The study made by the Corrective Services Branch of the Bureau of Naval Personnel in November 1948 into the attitudes of 500 naval prisoners serving sentences for unauthorized absence offenses is considered so relevant to this study that it has been reproduced in Appendix "B." This study merely presented certain data obtained from questionnaires filled out by prisoners selected at random, and no attempt was made to evaluate or explain the significance of the replies received. An attempt will be made in this study to cover some of these points.

Based upon these data, an attempt was made to evaluate the more prevalent causes of unauthorized absenteeism and to suggest some measures which have proved, or might prove, useful in combatting it.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION OF DATA

In this chapter there is set forth the results of the questionnaire which was completed by participating commands for each unauthorized absence offender whose absence exceeded twelve hours but which was not in excess of thirty days. The data obtained therefrom will be presented in four parts, namely, The Command; The Offense; The Offender; and The Reason.

#### The Command

The distribution of offenses by commands and activities participating in this survey is summarized in Table I (p. 17). The annual absentee rate has been computed by multiplying the monthly rate by twelve and therefore does not represent actual totals over a one-year period.

Names of ships and stations have been purposely omitted. For purposes of general information and orientation, however, the following background sketch of each has been included.

1. Naval Air Stations #1 and #2, both located on the West Coast, were fully operational stations with excellent modern facilities of every sort. Both were located near

TABLE I

## DISTRIBUTION OF 122 UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE OFFENSES BY COMMANDS AND ACTIVITIES

Activity	Aver- age On- board Count	Type of Offense			Total Of- fenses	Absen- tee Rate per 100 Men	
		Ab- sent Over Lib- erty	Ab- sent Over Leave	AWOL		Per Month	Per Year
Naval Air Sta.#1	665	2	1	0	3	0.45	5.4
Naval Air Sta.#2	1760	6	0	1	7	0.4	4.8
Aircraft Sqd."A"	600	2	1	0	3	0.5	6.0
Aircraft Sqd."B"	332	0	0	1	1	0.3	3.6
Aircraft Sqd."C"	290	0	1	0	1	0.34	4.1
Naval Barracks	593	4	0	0	4	0.67	8.1
Major Combatant Ship	1500	12	0	0	12	0.8	9.6
Destroyer "A"	232	2	0	1	3	1.3	15.5
Destroyer "B"	253	6	0	0	6	2.4	28.4
Destroyer "C"	255	4	0	0	4	1.6	18.9
Destroyer "D"	231	3	0	0	3	1.3	15.6
Destroyer "E"	240	10	0	0	10	4.2	50.0
Destroyer "F"	253	4	0	0	4	1.6	19.0
Destroyer "G"	231	3	1	1	5	2.2	26.0
Sub-Total: Ships & Sta's.	7435	58	4	4	66	0.89	10.6
Rec. Sta. Ships Co.	550	2	0	1	3	0.54	6.5
Transients	2300	23	18	12	53	2.3	27.6
Totals	10285	83	22	17	122	1.2	14.3

large cities where leave and liberty facilities were good. Barracks, married enlisted men's quarters and station recreational facilities were unusually complete and adequate.

2. Aircraft Squadrons. All three squadrons were based at Naval Air Station #1 (above) and were fully operational units. The two smaller ones were composite squadrons, which, because of the special nature of their operations, had "hand-picked" personnel. Chronic offenders were no problem because they could be transferred out of the squadron solely upon the request of the Commanding Officer. Motivation among enlisted personnel appeared to be extremely high; officer leadership, excellent. The larger squadron was a transport squadron which had recently been transferred to the West Coast. Morale, organisation and leadership within this squadron appeared to be of a high order. This squadron had recently conducted operations in support of the Berlin Airlift.

3. The Naval Barracks was located on the East Coast. The feature that made this command remarkable was the high percentage of negro personnel -- 55 percent. Station facilities, including recreation, were in no way comparable with those of the two West Coast Air Stations, but were nevertheless well above-average.

4. The major combatant ship was based at Norfolk, Virginia, in which port all absence offenses took place. Normal liberty was granted during approximately one-half of the

monthly period. A special factor entering into absence cases from this ship was the State of Virginia's system of alcoholic beverage control, which prohibits sale of distilled liquors over bars, yet permits purchases by the bottle in State stores. For reasons that will be discussed later, this factor had a significant bearing on the types of absence offenses committed by members of that ship's company.

5. The seven destroyers, all attached to one squadron, had recently returned to their home port at San Diego from rotational duty in the Western Pacific. With the exception of local operations at sea, normal liberty was granted during this thirty-day period.

6. The Receiving Station. This was a major Receiving Station on the West Coast. Station facilities, including recreation, were good, although not as modern nor as complete as at the two Naval Air Stations. Liberty and leave facilities were very good. Station morale among regularly assigned personnel was good; among transients, poor. The problems of dealing with a large transient population averaging 2300 men created many special problems which did not exist at other stations.

#### Summary

Keeping in mind that this survey was conducted over a relatively short period of time and concerned itself with only a fraction of the unauthorised absence offenses occurring

within the commands surveyed, the absentee rates in Table I appeared to indicate the following trends:

1. Absenteeism was the most serious problem among transient personnel at the Receiving Station and in the destroyers.
2. It was less serious at the Naval Air Stations and in the three aircraft squadrons.
3. The absentee rate in the major combatant ship was lower, percentage-wise, than in any of the seven destroyers.

#### The Offense

The 122 case histories will next be examined from the standpoint of: (1) Duration of absence, (2) Type of offense, (3) Circumstances of return, (4) Seasonal influences.

1. Duration of absence. The duration of unauthorized absences from Naval jurisdiction is summarized in Table II (p. 21). The total time that these 122 men were absent was 610 days. The average duration of absence from the Receiving Station was five days, twenty-three hours; from ships and other naval stations, four days, three hours; and for the entire group, exactly five days.

Owing to the presence of nine cases that exceed twenty days' duration, the average or mean is misleading as an indication of central tendency. The median, therefore, gives a clearer indication and shows that 50 percent of all these cases were of shorter duration than two days and five hours.

TABLE II  
DURATION IN DAYS OF 122 UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE OFFENSES

Duration (days)	Receiving Station	Ships and Other Stations	Total	\$ Total
1/2 -- 5	40	52	92	75
6 -- 10	6	8	14	12
11 -- 15	2	4	6	5
16 -- 20	1	0	1	1
21 -- 25	6	0	6	5
26 -- 30	1	2	3	2
II	56	66	122	-
Median	2 days 12 hrs.	1 day 21 hrs.	2 days 5 hrs.	
Mean	5 days 23 hrs.	4 days 3 hrs.	5 days 0 hrs.	

The 610 man-days lost to the Navy included only the time that the offenders were actually absent from naval jurisdiction while overleave or absent without leave. This did not take into account the man-hours during which the offender was unavailable for his regular duties while awaiting disciplinary action, during trial or hearing at mast, and, where confinement was adjudged as part of the sentence, while serving his sentence. Also, it did not take into consideration the officer and man-hours which were spent on each case by Commanding, Executive, and division officers, by members of courts-martial, and by clerical personnel. It becomes evident, therefore, that these

unauthorized absences were extremely costly to the Navy, not only from the direct loss of the services of the offender, but also from indirect losses to those officers and men who took action thereon.

2. Type of offense. Of those offenses, 68 percent involved absence over liberty, 18 percent over leave, and 14 percent absence without leave. The relative frequency of these various types of unauthorized absences by activities was shown in Table I. (p. 17).

It is noteworthy that A.W.O.L. offenses were far more frequent at the Receiving Station than at other activities surveyed. This becomes readily understandable when the status of the offender and his reason for being at the Receiving Station is taken into consideration. This information is summarized in Table III. It is noteworthy that, of the four A.W.O.L. offenders who were awaiting transfer, two had already deliberately missed the sailing of the ships to which they were regularly assigned in order to avoid overseas duty, and went A.W.O.L. to miss the draft which would have returned them to those ships.

TABLE III  
STATUS OF 13 A.W.O.L. OFFENDERS AT A RECEIVING STATION

Status	Number of cases
Awaiting bad-conduct discharge	4
Awaiting transfer to new duty station	4
Awaiting disciplinary action	3
Awaiting discharge (hardship cases)	2

The fact that practically all the cases of absence over leave occurred at the Receiving Station is best explained by variations in leave policies. On board ship and at Naval Stations and Naval Air Stations, nearly all leaves, exclusive of those for emergency reasons or for re-enlistment, are granted during certain clearly-defined leave periods, such as the Christmas holidays and at other times when there are lulls in operating schedules. The period of this survey (15 January - 15 February) was not a leave period at any of these activities. At Receiving Stations, however, transient personnel are granted all their accrued leave, provided they desire to take it, before being transferred to new duty stations. At the Receiving Station included in this survey, there was an average transient population of 2300 men, of which about 450 were on leave at all times during the month.

3. Circumstances of return. As would be expected among offenders whose absence fell short of the thirty-day limit which separates unauthorised absence from desertion, the great majority returned to naval jurisdiction voluntarily. The circumstances of return of each of these 122 offenders is summarized in Table IV (p. 24).

Only sixteen of all these offenders were apprehended and thus returned to naval jurisdiction involuntarily. Eleven of these sixteen were transients at the Receiving Station. This unequal distribution is probably best explained by the fact that it is one of the functions of a receiving

station to take disciplinary action upon stragglers from other naval activities, either because the offender's ship has already sailed, or because it is not in the interests of speedy justice to return him to his regular duty station for punishment.

TABLE IV  
CIRCUMSTANCES OF RETURN OF 122 OFFENDERS

Circumstance	Receiving Station	Ships and other Stations	Total	% Total
Returned voluntarily	45	61	106	87
Apprehended	11	5	16	13
Total	56	66	122	100

4. Seasonal Factors. It is reasonable to suppose that more absenteeism occurs during certain months and seasons of the year than during others. With a view toward establishing the existence of such a seasonal trend, the records of the Navy Department for the calendar years of 1948 and 1949 were examined to determine how many court-martial cases having unauthorized absence or desertion as the principal charge were reviewed during each month. The results are summarized in Tables V (p. 25) and VI (p. 26). It should be borne in mind that the monthly totals refer to the number of court-martial records reviewed in the Navy Department, not the number of offenses actually committed during that month.

TABLE V

COURTS-MARTIAL FOR UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE  
OFFENSES REVIEWED IN THE NAVY DEPARTMENT DURING 1948

Column:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Month	G.C.M.	S.C.M.	D.C.	Total Courts	Average enlisted strength	Courts-Martial per 1000 Men	Rank-order
January	333	721	975	2029	367,107	5.54	1
February	353	946	702	2001	357,572	5.62	2
March	390	922	1281	2593	357,437	7.27	4
April	365	763	1181	2309	358,724	5.88	3
May	306	1050	1286	2642	353,795	7.50	5
June	222	1197	1514	2933	354,466	8.27	8
July	339	1477	1663	3479	364,100	9.56	11
August	281	1417	1526	3224	364,600	8.87	9
September	340	1287	1310	2937	373,852	7.86	6
October	254	1454	1777	3485	381,125	9.17	10
November	177	1547	1424	3148	383,863	8.23	7
December	329	2586	1893	4808	381,448	12.60	12
Totals	3689	15367	16532	35568	366,507	8.10	-

Because of the time required to draw up the charges; try the offender; and prepare, review and forward the court-martial record to the Navy Department, there would be a lag of about three weeks for deck courts, four weeks for summary courts-martial, and six to eight weeks for general courts-martial between date of the actual offense and completion of final review of each case.

TABLE VI

COURTS-MARTIAL FOR UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE  
OFFENSES REVIEWED IN THE NAVY DEPARTMENT DURING 1949

Column:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Month	G.C.M.	S.C.M.	D.C.	Total Courts	Average Enlisted Strength	Courts-Martial per 1000 Men	Rank-order
January	232	1611	1238	2481	384,394	6.47	1
February	263	1131	1539	2933	385,259	7.60	4
March	302	1369	1482	3153	384,330	8.20	6
April	438	1163	1022	2623	382,660	6.88	2
May	552	1321	1498	3371	381,336	8.85	9
June	262	1340	1422	3024	382,810	7.90	5
July	276	1401	1692	3371	384,514	8.78	8
August	110	1698	2038	3846	379,259	10.15	11
September	363	1292	2760	4435	367,365	12.06	12
October	239	1452	1027	2718	360,450	7.54	3
November	148	1431	1877	3456	356,072	9.73	10
December	252	1228	1430	2910	351,850	8.29	7
Totals	3439	15837	19045	36321	375,025	8.52	-

Comparative absentee rates by months have been determined by computing the number of courts-martial per thousand men, and then assigning each monthly rate a rank-order. The lowest monthly absentee rate in each year was assigned the rank of one and the highest, twelve. When the two tables are com-

pared, it is considered somewhat significant that the months of January, February, March, and April were below the median in rank for both years, while July, August, November, and December were consistently above the median. After making allowance for a lag of one to two months between date of offense and date of final review of the court-martial record, there is an indication that considerably less absenteeism occurred during the winter months than during the summer, possibly because warmer weather was conducive to the type of adventure which was associated with unauthorized absence offenses.

#### Summary

1. The 122 cases resulted in the direct loss of 610 man days, the average or mean length of absence being 5 days.
2. Fifty percent of these offenses were of shorter duration than 2 days and 5 hours.
3. Only 14 percent of the cases involved A.W.O.L. offenses. The great majority (68 percent) involved failure to return from overnight or week-end liberty.
4. Eighty-seven percent of all offenders returned voluntarily to naval jurisdiction.
5. Unauthorized absenteeism appears to be more prevalent during the summer than in the winter months, possibly because of seasonal influences.

#### The Offender

With the view toward determining what types of

enlisted men commit unauthorized absence offenses, the questionnaire included some personal history data which was readily obtainable from the offender's service record. Based upon information submitted in each case history, unauthorized absenteeism will be considered in the light of the following personal characteristics of the offender:

- (1) G.C.T. Score, (2) Age, (3) Length of service, (4) Pay grade, (5) Previous offenses, (6) Broken service enlistments, (7) Social factors.

1. G.C.T. Score. To determine whether there is any positive relationship between the offender's score on the Navy General Classification Test and absenteeism, the number of offenders falling into each of the five standard score groupings was totaled. The resulting distribution as compared to the established norms for the Navy as a whole are shown in Table VII (p. 29) and Graph 1 (p. 30).

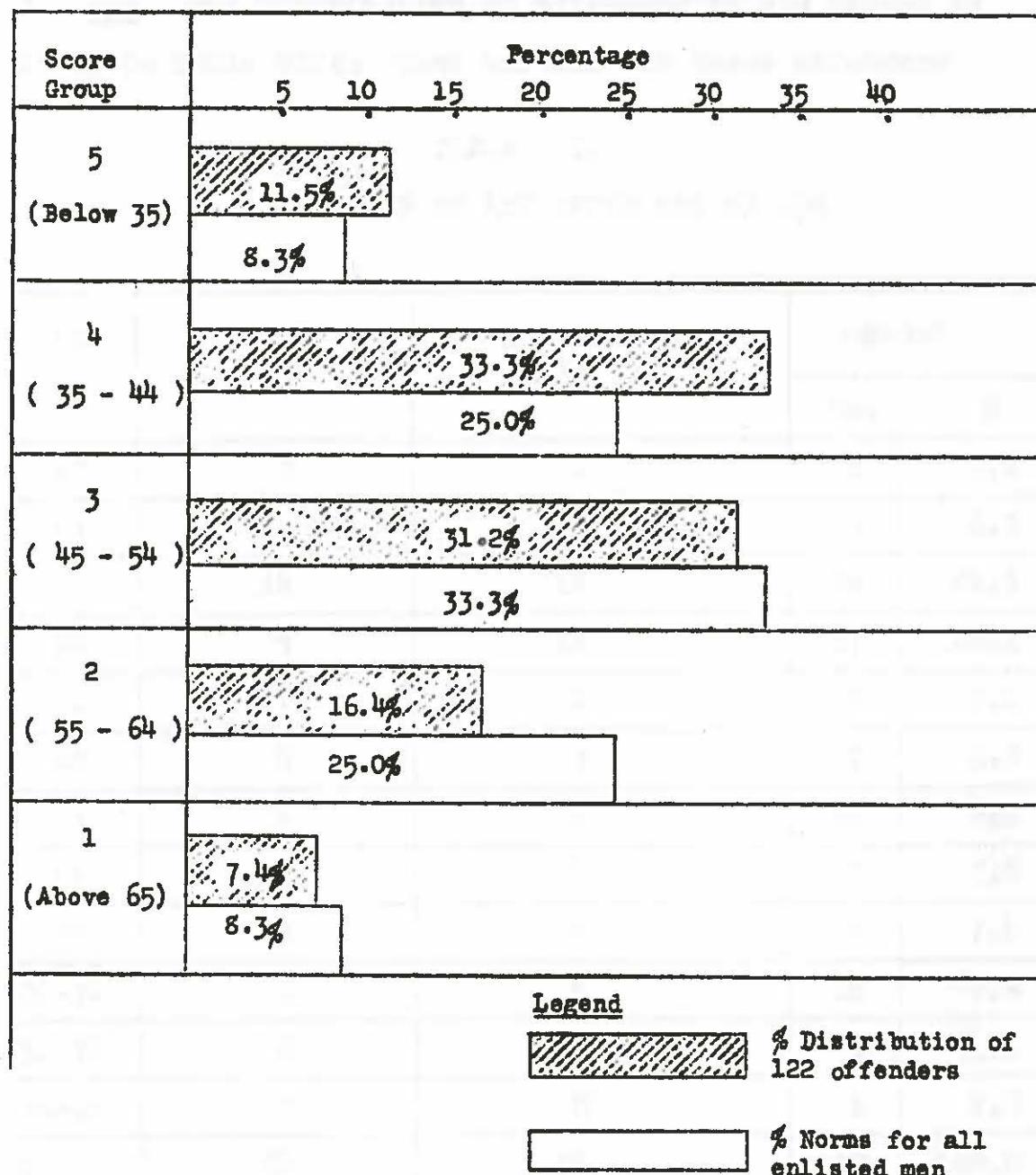
It is considered significant that the distribution of G.C.T. scores of these 122 offenders was decidedly skewed toward the lower two groupings. Assuming that the Navy G.C.T. is a valid measure of intelligence, these results suggest that men of below-average intelligence are more likely to commit unauthorized absence offenses than those of average or above-average intelligence.

Although this evidence tends to support the theory that men of above-average intelligence are less likely to commit unauthorized absence offenses, the percentage of

TABLE VII  
DISTRIBUTION OF 122 OFFENDERS ACCORDING  
TO SCORES ON NAVY G.C.T.

Group	Range of Scores	% Norms for USN	Distribution of Offenders					
			Receiving Station		Ships and other Stations		Total	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I	above 65	8.33	3	5.3	6	9.1	9	7.4
II	55-64	25	8	14.3	12	18.2	20	16.4
III	45-54	33.33	16	28.6	22	33.3	38	31.2
IV	35-44	25	23	41.1	18	27.3	41	33.5
V	below 35	8.33	6	10.7	8	12.1	14	11.5
Total			56	100.0	66	100.0	122	100.0

offenders in group I (scores above 65) approached much more closely the relative population of this group in the Navy as a whole than did those men in groups II and III. It is considered probable that men with very high G.C.T. scores become bored or discouraged more readily if they are assigned to duties which do not fully utilize their capabilities or which are not sufficiently challenging. This might apply, for example, in the case of a high G.C.T. seaman who has been assigned to protracted tours of duty as a crew's messman or compartment cleaner.



GRAPH 1. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF G.C.T. SCORES OF 122 OFFENDERS IN COMPARISON TO NORMS FOR ALL ENLISTED MEN IN THE U. S. NAVY (1949)

2. Age. The distribution of offenders by age groups is shown in Table VIII. That one-half of these offenders

TABLE VIII  
DISTRIBUTION OF 122 OFFENDERS BY AGE

Age	Receiving Station	Ships and other Stations	Total	
			No.	Per cent
17	0	1	1	0.8
18	3	5	8	6.5
19	14	12	26	21.3
20	9	18	27	22.1
21	7	2	9	7.4
22	4	3	7	5.8
23	4	6	10	8.2
24	3	4	7	5.8
25	3	6	9	7.4
26-30	6	6	12	9.8
31-35	2	3	5	4.1
36-40	1	0	1	0.8
All	56	66	122	100.0
Median	21 yrs. 3 mos.	20 yrs. 10 mos.	21 yrs. 0 mos.	
Mean	22 yrs. 2 mos.	22 yrs. 5 mos.	22 yrs. 3 mos.	
Range	18-37	17-35	17-37	

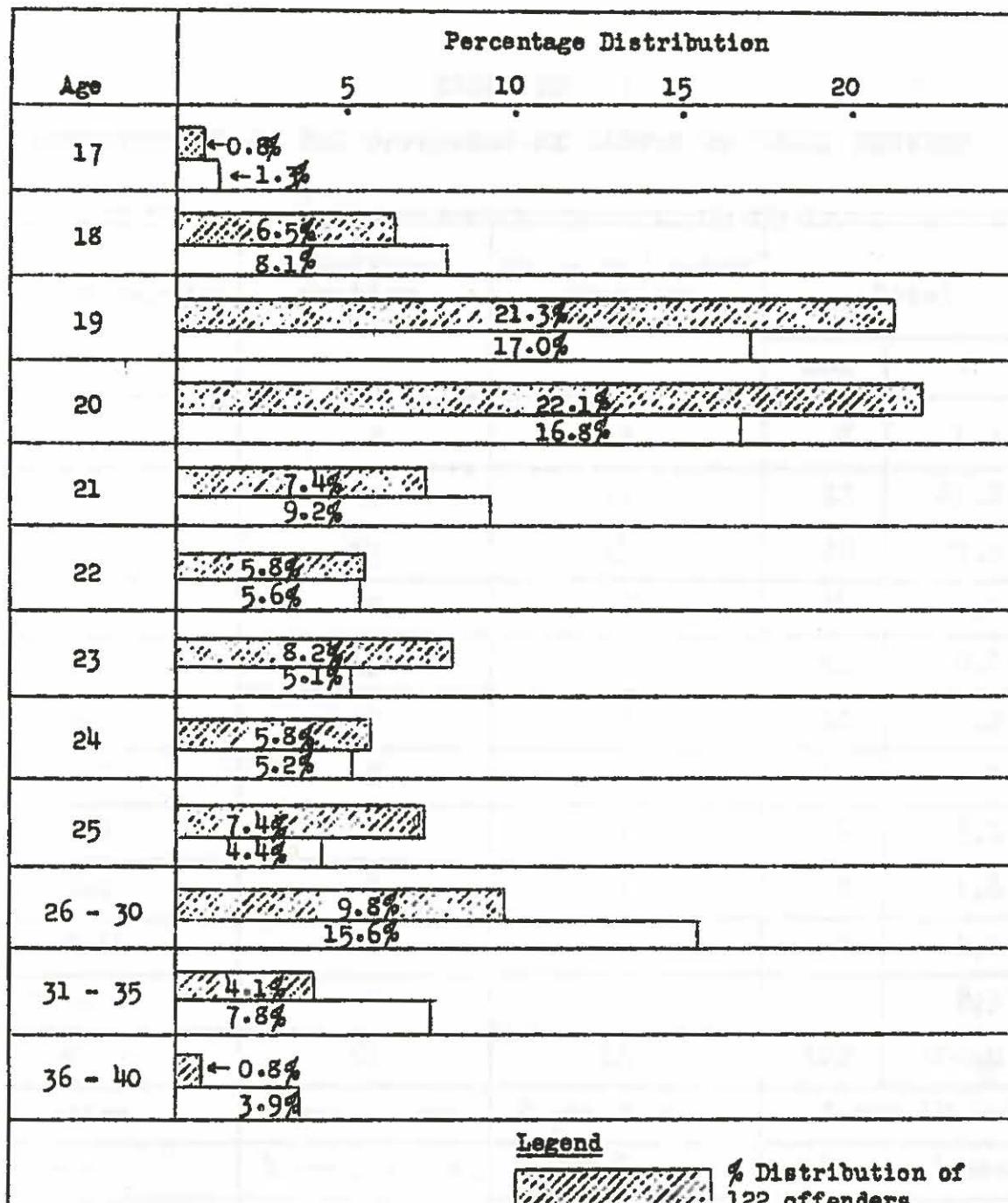
were over twenty-one years of age, and 93 percent over nineteen indicates that the great majority were old enough, at

least chronologically, to have some appreciation of the seriousness of their conduct. The most usual ages of these 122 offenders were nineteen and twenty.

In Graph 2 (p. 33), the distribution of offenders by age has been superimposed upon the estimated age groupings of all male enlisted personnel serving in the Navy in December 1949. It is seen that the nineteen and twenty-year-olds contributed a percentage of absentee offenses far in excess of their numerical proportion in the Navy. As would have been expected, the older men (twenty-six and above) contributed a relatively small percentage of offenses, because these groupings also included the senior petty officers and men of relatively long service.

3. Length of service. As would be expected from the age distribution, the great majority of offenders were men having relatively short naval service. Table IX (p. 34) shows the distribution of these 122 offenders by number of years' service and the percentage of offenders falling into each grouping by length of service.

It is noteworthy that one-half of all offenses were committed by men having served longer than two years and ten months. This emphasizes a previous conclusion that the majority of offenders were not irresponsible recruits, but mature men, chronologically at least. Twenty-six percent of all offenders were in their second year's service and 23 percent in their third year.

Legend

 % Distribution of 122 offenders

 % Distribution of all enlisted men

GRAPH 2. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 122 OFFENDERS BY AGE IN COMPARISON WITH ESTIMATED AGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALL ENLISTED MEN IN THE NAVY (1949)

TABLE IX  
DISTRIBUTION OF 122 OFFENDERS BY LENGTH OF NAVAL SERVICE

Years Service	Receiving Station	Ships and other Stations	Total	
			No.	%
0-1	2	3	5	4.1
1-2	13	19	32	26.2
2-3	14	14	28	23.0
3-4	7	7	14	11.5
4-5	5	6	11	9.0
5-6	7	3	10	8.2
6-7	2	9	11	9.0
7-8	3	1	4	3.3
8-9	0	2	2	1.6
9-10	2	0	2	1.6
Over 10	1	2	3	2.5
<b>All</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Median	2 yrs. 11 mos.	2 yrs. 9 mos.	2 yrs. 10 mos.	
Mean	4 yrs. 3 mos.	4 yrs. 4 mos.	4 yrs. 4 mos.	
Range	1/2-15	1/2-18	1/2-18	

The very low percentage of offenders with less than one year's service is explained by a number of factors, perhaps the most significant of which is that relatively few recruits were enlisted during 1949. Reductions in the over-

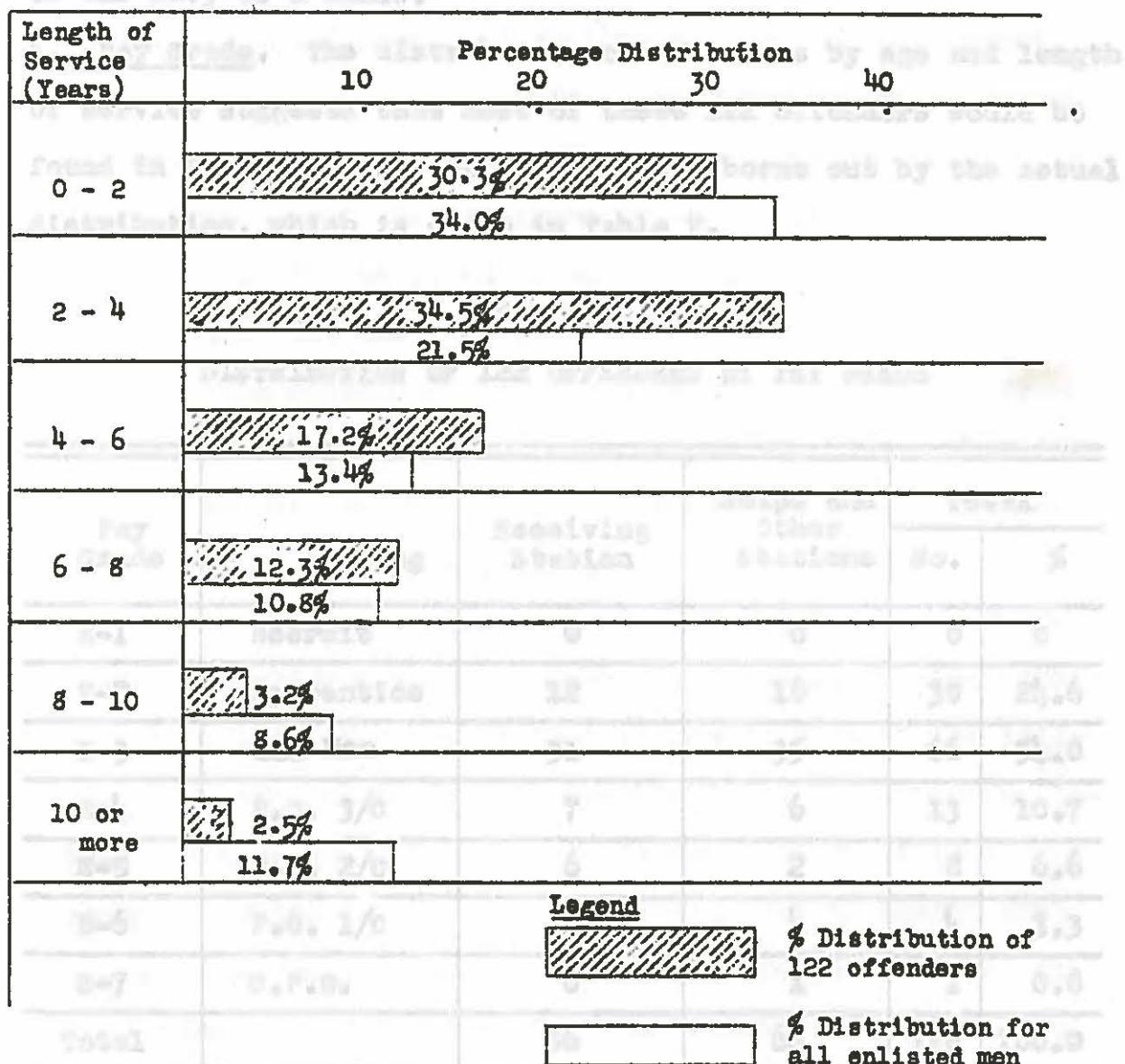
all strength of the Navy, together with a high reenlistment rate during that period, made it unnecessary for the Navy to enlist large numbers of recruits. From 1 July to 31 December 1949, only twenty-four percent of the gains in total naval strength consisted of recruits, while nearly seventy-five percent were reenlistments. This small number of recruits permitted highly selective recruiting, as evidenced by the fact that ninety-two percent of all men recruited in December 1949 were high school graduates who scored an average of 58.3 on the Navy's G.C.T. This is in marked contrast to the figures for December 1947, when only 15 percent of the recruits were high school graduates, and the average G.C.T. score was 46<sup>a</sup>. Moreover, 81.5 percent of all men recruited in December 1949 were inducted under the Navy's High School Seaman Recruit program, which guaranteed the applicant class "A" school training upon completion of his recruit training period. It is evident, therefore, that the great majority of new recruits during 1949 were assigned to service schools, and for that reason very few were present within the commands surveyed.

The relatively large number of offenders who were in their second or third year's service suggests an explanation that an equally large number of men in the entire naval population have the same relatively short previous service. To determine whether such was the case, the percentage dis-

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a. From statistics furnished by the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

tribution of offenders was compared with that of all Navy enlisted men, and the results are shown in graph 3. ~~offenders~~ share of offenders. It is noteworthy, however, that it was not until length of service reached eight years that the trend was reversed and the proportion of offenders fell below that of the Navy as a whole.



GRAPH 3. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 122 ABSENCE OFFENDERS BY LENGTH OF SERVICE IN COMPARISON WITH THAT OF ALL ENLISTED MEN IN THE NAVY (1949)

It is apparent that those men who have served between two and four years contributed a highly disproportionate share of offenders. It is noteworthy, moreover, that it was not until length of service reached eight years that the trend was reversed and the proportion of offenders fell below that of the Navy as a whole.

4. Pay Grade. The distribution of offenders by age and length of service suggests that most of these 122 offenders would be found in the lower pay grades. This is borne out by the actual distribution, which is shown in Table X.

TABLE X  
DISTRIBUTION OF 122 OFFENDERS BY PAY GRADE

Pay Grade	Rating	Receiving Station	Ships and Other Stations	Total	
				No.	%
E-1	Recruit	0	0	0	0
E-2	Apprentice	12	16	30	24.6
E-3	--- Man	31	35	66	54.0
E-4	P.O. 3/c	7	6	13	10.7
E-5	P.O. 2/c	6	2	8	6.6
E-6	P.O. 1/c	0	4	4	3.3
E-7	C.P.O.	0	1	1	0.8
Total		56	66	122	100.0

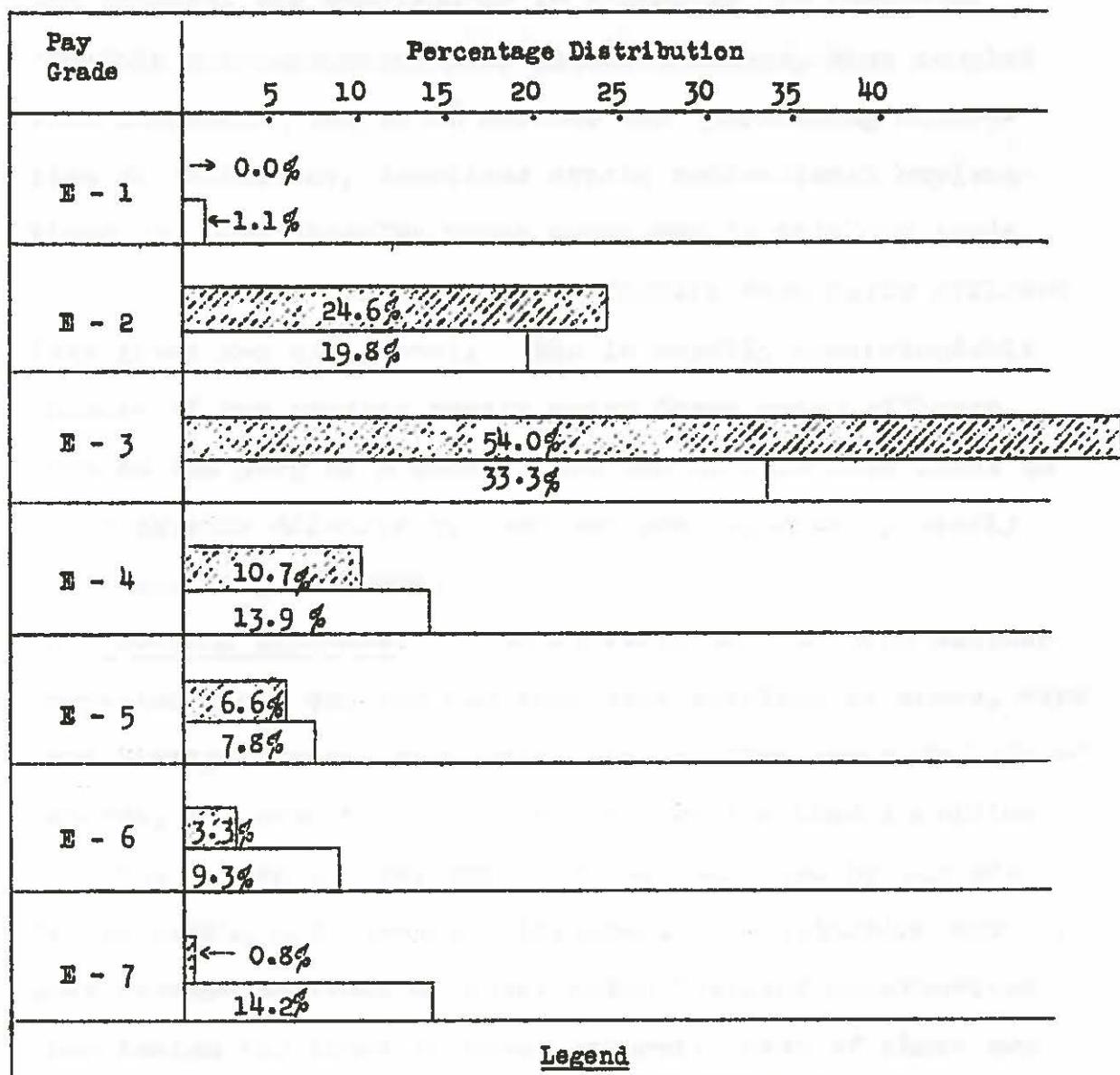
Of all offenders, 78 percent were non-rated men (pay grades E-1, 2, and 3)<sup>a</sup>, and 54 percent were in pay grade E-3 alone. That none of the offenders were in pay E-1 (recruit) is explained by the Navy's policy of promoting all recruits to pay grade E-2 (apprentice) automatically upon completion of the recruit training period. For this reason, no men in pay grade E-1 were found in this survey.

Because Table I showed a preponderance of offenders in the non-rated grades, it might be assumed that such a distribution would be explained by an equally high ratio of non-rated in the total enlisted population of the Navy. That such is not the case is shown in graph 4 (p. 39), which compares the percentage distribution of offenders by pay grades with that of all enlisted men in the Navy. This comparison emphasizes the disproportionate ratio of offenders in pay grade E-3 in particular.

The relatively large number of third pay grade offenders is attributed to a number of factors. Perhaps the most important of these is that this pay grade is the logical "stepping point" for the man who lacks the ambition, intelligence or qualifications to become a petty officer. Because promotion to all petty officer grades is highly competitive in the peace-time Navy, men having a low level of intelligence, and those having poor records in proficiency

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a. Pay grade designations are those listed in the Career Compensation Act of 1949. Pay grade E-1 under this Act corresponds to pay grade 7 under the former Pay Bill.

Legend

 % Distribution of 122 offenders

 % Distribution of all enlisted men

GRAPH 4. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 122 ABSENCE OFFENDERS BY PAY GRADES IN COMPARISON WITH THAT OF ALL ENLISTED MEN IN THE NAVY (1949)

and conduct, are handicapped in competing for vacancies. Possible discouragement over non-advancement, when coupled with increasing length of service and approaching expiration of enlistment, doubtless create motivational explanations for high absentee rates among men in this pay grade.

Only 22 percent of the offenders were petty officers (pay grade E-4 and above). This is readily understandable because of the greater equity which these petty officers have in the Navy as a career, and the more serious light in which absence offenses by such men are regarded by nearly all Commanding Officers.

5. Previous offenses. In an endeavor to determine whether "repeaters," or men who had committed previous offenses, were more likely to take unauthorized leaves than men with "clear" records, the case history questionnaire included inquiries into the number of previous offenses committed by the offender during his current enlistment. A distinction was made between previous offenses which involved unauthorized absenteeism and those of other natures. Each of these two categories were totaled separately, and in addition, the number of men having no previous offenses of either sort was determined. The results are shown in Tables XI and XII (p. 41).

Although just over half of the group surveyed had committed no previous absence offenses, many of this number had committed offenses of other sorts. Consequently, only

TABLE XI

DISTRIBUTION OF 122 OFFENDERS ACCORDING  
TO NUMBER OF PREVIOUS UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE OFFENSES

Previous A.O.L. Offenses	Receiving Station	Ships and other Stations	Total	%
1	13	13	26	-
2	9	6	15	-
3	2	7	9	-
4 or more	2	4	6	-
Total Previous Offenders	26	30	56	46
No Previous Offenses	30	36	66	54
Totals	56	66	122	100

TABLE XII

DISTRIBUTION OF 122 OFFENDERS ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF PREVIOUS  
OFFENSES OTHER THAN UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE

Previous Offenses (except A.O.L.)	Receiving Station	Ships and other Stations	Total	%
1	10	15	25	-
2	11	2	13	-
3	3	0	3	-
4 or more	4	3	7	-
Total Previous Offenders	28	20	48	39
No Previous Offenses	28	46	74	61
Totals	56	66	122	100

forty-one men, or 34 percent of the total, had "clear records" (no previous offenses of any sort during current enlistment).

As would have been expected, it appears that "repeaters" are more likely to commit unauthorized absence offenses than those men with clear records. This might be explained by an attitude of indifference on the part of the offender once the protection afforded by a clear record is lost, as well as by certain psychological factors which will be discussed later.

6. Broken-service Enlistments. Forty-eight men, or 39 percent of all offenders, were serving under broken-service enlistments. Presumably, many of these men had war service, and all had tried civilian life for at least three months before reenlisting. Whether a liking for military service or an inability to get along in civil life prompted these men to return to the Navy is not known. Prior to the enactment of the Career Compensation Act in 1949, "family allowances" were a considerable inducement for enlistment to men having several dependents, and there can be little doubt that some of these men considered these allowances to be the easiest way to discharge their responsibilities toward the support of their dependents. With the passage of this new Pay Act, the Navy Department permitted the administrative separation of any man with dependents whose earnings thereunder were less than under the family allowance pro-

visions of the former pay bill. Many took advantage of this means of discharge during the closing months of 1949.

Although no statistics are available as to the total number of broken-service men in the entire Navy, it seems probable that the ratio of broken-service men to all enlisted men in the Navy would be well below the 48 percent found among overleaves offenders in this study.

7. Racial factors. To determine whether the racial origin of the offender had any significant relationship to absentee rates in this study, each offender was classified by race. Table XIII shows that 92.8 percent of all offenders were Caucasian and the remaining 7.2 percent negroes. In this table there has been included the present racial distribution of all Navy enlisted men.

TABLE XIII  
DISTRIBUTION OF 122 OFFENDERS BY RACE

Race	% Total in Navy (a)	Unauthorized absence offenders	
		Number	% Total
Caucasian	93.9	113	92.8
Negroid	4.4	9	7.2
Malayan	1.6	0	0
Other	0.1	0	0

(a) From latest statistics furnished by the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Because four of the nine unauthorized absences of-fenses were contributed by the Naval Barracks in which 55 percent of all personnel were negroes, the ratio of negro offenders to the total was definitely distorted by the in-clusion of these cases. When this activity was excluded from consideration, the percentage of negro offenders in the remaining commands dropped to 4.2 percent, which is just under the percentage of negro enlisted men in the Navy as a whole.

Because of the almost unique conditions existing at this Naval Barracks additional statistics were obtained on all absentee offenses occurring at this station during a period of one month. It was found that there were a total of thirty-seven absentee cases, all of which were committed by negro personnel. Thirty-two of these cases were of shorter duration than twelve hours and one was over thirty days' duration. The average number of negro enlisted men during the month was 328. This rendered a monthly ab-sentee rate of 11.3 per one hundred men, and this, when projected over a period of one year rendered a rate of well over one offense for every man in the command. The absentee rate among the remaining 265 non-negro personnel at the same station was zero.

The great difference between these two absentee rates is explained in part by differences in working hours and liberty schedules. It is also true that the great ma-jority of these negroes were non-rated men in the steward's

branch, whereas most of the non-negro group were petty officers. Nevertheless, the evaluation of these thirty-seven absence cases showed that nearly all of them were caused by overindulgence in liquor, and that there was reflected a very prevalent lack of appreciation of the seriousness of unauthorized absence as an offense.

#### Summary

1. Men with low G.C.T. scores committed unauthorized absence offenses more frequently than did men with high scores. Although only 33.3 percent of all men in the Navy have G.C.T. scores below 45, 45 percent of all offenders in this survey had scores below 45. Conversely, only 23.8 percent of the offenders had high G.C.T. scores (above 55), while 33.3 percent of all men in the Navy fall into this category.
2. One-half of all offenders were over twenty-one years of age; certainly old enough to appreciate the seriousness of their conduct. The largest single group of offenders were the twenty-year-olds, followed closely by the nineteen-year-olds.
3. Although the greatest number of offenses were committed by men in their second year of service, one-half of all offenders had served longer than two years and ten months. The great majority had sufficient naval experience to realize the seriousness of absenteeism.
4. Seventy-eight percent of all offenders were non-rated men and therefore in the lowest three pay grades. Because

54 percent of all offenders were in pay grade E-3 alone, it is thought that some factors relating to motivation may offer a partial explanation.

5. Only 34 percent of all offenders had previous clear records. Of the 66 percent whose records were not clear, 46 percent had committed previous offenses involving unauthorized absence and 39 percent, offenses of other natures.

6. Thirty-nine percent of all offenders were serving in broken-service enlistments, a percentage that appears very high in respect to their total population in the service.

7. For offenses of the kind included in this study, negroes did not contribute a disproportionate number.

8. Additional studies within a command having 55 percent negroes indicated that the absentee rate was very high if overleave offenses of less than twelve hours' duration were included.

#### The Reason

Up to this point, unauthorized absenteeism has been studied from the standpoint of objective and readily observable factors such as duty station, nature and duration of offense, and certain items readily obtainable from the offender's service record. In passing to the reason for the offense, the information at once becomes highly subjective because a number of uncontrolled factors have entered into the study. One basic source of error is the questionable

truthfulness of the offender's stated reason for going overleave. Furthermore, since this reason has depended to a great extent upon an evaluation by an immediate superior, other sources of error are introduced. Among these are the evaluator's knowledge of the offender, his skill in interviewing, and his ability to gain the offender's full confidence. Officers serving in smaller commands are, for example, generally in a better position to do a thorough job of evaluation than those serving in larger units. At the Receiving Station, the evaluation of offenses was for the most part negative because nearly all offenders were transients and the evaluating officer (a Chaplain) had neither the time nor the opportunity to know the offenders. Owing to these factors and because of the relatively large number of offenses (fourteen per week), the stated cause for absenteeism at this Receiving Station was little more than the reason given by the offender himself.

In nearly every case of absenteeism there would appear to be both a surface reason and an underlying cause. Surface reasons may take the form of rationalisations. They may be little more than convenient excuses to gain sympathy of the Commanding Officer. They may also mask feelings of overt guilt or shame for the offender's actions. In most cases it would require the services of a psychiatrist to uncover the underlying reasons, for these concern themselves with such factors as family history, frustration

tolerances and basic adjustment of the individual to life in the service.

Another source of error is the difficulty of isolating any principal reason. It is virtually impossible to consider the various reasons for absenteeism in isolation, because in most instances the offense resulted from the interaction of several factors, some of which are surface reasons and others, underlying ones. Drunkenness, for example, cannot truthfully be considered as the sole reason for overstaying leave except possibly in the case of alcoholics. The question "why did he get drunk?" requires answering. Perhaps he harbors resentment against his ship or his superiors. Then again he may be discouraged over his performance of duty or chances for advancement. Or, again, he may have marital or financial problems. It is thus evident that surface reasons can be quite unreliable, often taking the form of mere rationalizations.

In conducting this survey an attempt has been made to classify the more usual reasons for men going overleave into six general categories, each of which will be discussed in the light of the cases falling thereunder. These classifications are: (1) Personal emergencies (family matters), (2) Misconduct while on leave or liberty, (3) Negative motivation, (4) Faulty administration or leadership, (5) Inaptitude for the service, (6) Miscellaneous.

1. Personal Emergencies. In thirty-two cases, or 26

percent of the total, some form of personal emergency was considered to be the principal reason for the offender's unauthorized absence. Eighteen percent of these cases involved the marital troubles or domestic problems of married enlisted men, and in another eight cases, death or illness in immediate family was the stated reason. Table XIV shows the various kinds of personal emergencies reported and the distribution by commands.

TABLE XIV  
DISTRIBUTION OF THIRTY-TWO UNAUTHORIZED  
ABSENCES INVOLVING PERSONAL EMERGENCIES  
BY NATURE OF EMERGENCY AND  
BY COMMANDS

Nature of Emergency	Command to Which Attached					
	H.A.S. and Sqdns.	Nav. Brks.	Major Combat Ship	D.D.U	Rec. Sta.	Total
Domestic or marital troubles	3		1	3	11	18
Death or illness in family	1				7	8
Complaints from home	2				1	3
Financial emergencies					2	2
Urgent personal arrangements					1	1
Totals	6	0	1	3	22	32

A great majority of absence offenses by senior petty officers were caused or aggravated by domestic problems, although liquor was also a contributing reason. The case of C.E.C., a Chief Petty Officer is illustrative:

This man was thirty-five years of age, had eighteen years' continuous service in the Navy, was married and the father of two children. After a family row concerning his wife's alleged infidelity, his wife left him, taking the children with her. He now drinks heavily whenever he is on liberty, and on this occasion was nearly three days overleave.

The case of M.L.W., a Petty Officer, first class, is also typical:

This man was twenty-six years of age, had nine years' continuous Naval service, was married but had no children. His wife recently left him for another man. He requested and was granted five days' leave to effect a reconciliation; instead he stayed drunk in a local hotel room, and was a day and a half late in returning from his leave.

Death or illness in the family was another frequent reason stated for being overleave. Such offenses were often of the sort committed by married non-rated men. For example:

H.W.R., an airman, was twenty-two years of age and had four years' service in the Navy. His G.C.T. score was 40. He was married and had one young child but his family were living with his wife's parents in the middle west. While on pay-day liberty after receiving a letter the same day from his mother-in-law to the effect that his wife and child were "ailing," he decided to go home, thus overstaying his leave by seven days. He made no attempt to solve his problems through any official agency.

Death in the family, regardless of how remote the relationship, is a frequent reason for overleave by negro personnel. The case of T.R.B., a steward'sman, is illustrative:

This stewardman was twenty-three years of age and had three years' Naval service. His G.C.T. score was 32. Upon receiving a telegram that his aunt in Texas had died, he immediately requested ten days' leave, but his request was disapproved because of a shortage of stewardmen in the command and the lack of any apparent emergency. He went ashore that evening, hitch-hiked to Texas, and twelve days later surrendered himself at the Recruiting Station nearest to his home.

2. Misconduct while on Liberty or Leave. Cases of this sort numbered thirty-five, and accounted for 29 percent of all offenses. Eighteen of these cases involved overindulgence in liquor, while another fourteen were ascribed to women or bad company. Only three cases resulted from arrests and conviction by the civil police. The distribution of these offenses by commands is shown in Table XV.

TABLE XV

DISTRIBUTION OF THIRTY-FIVE UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCES  
INVOLVING MISCONDUCT WHILE ON LEAVE AND LIBERTY  
BY NATURE OF MISCONDUCT AND BY COMMANDS

Nature of Misconduct	Command to which Attached						Total
	U.A.S. and Sqdns.	Nav. Brks.	Major Combat. Ship	D.D.'s	Rec. Sta.		
Conviction by civil authorities	1			1	1		3
Overindulgence in liquor			5	9	4		18
Women	2			2	1		5
Bad company			1	2	6		9
Totals	3	0	6	14	12		35

While on liberty in Norfolk, these men each bought a fifth of whiskey, which was not entirely consumed when the taverns closed. Evidently being loath to abandon a partially-filled bottle, these men took a hotel room to continue the party and finish the bottle. They awoke the next morning too late to return to the ship on time. Faced with the possibility of being restricted to the ship until she sailed for southern maneuvers the next week, J.J.S. and G.E.H. went to New York to visit J.J.S.'s parents, then returned to the ship six days later.

3. Negative Motivation. In seventeen cases, or 14 percent of the total, negative motivation appeared to be the reason for unauthorized absence. Fourteen men stated that dislike for the Navy or present duty station, or a dislike or lack of interest in present duties, prompted them to overstay their leaves. Moreover, it is considered probable that motivational factors were the principal or at least a contributing cause of absenteeism in a number of other cases which have been attributed to drunkenness and other misconduct while on leave or liberty. The distribution of these seventeen cases by nature of complaint and by commands is shown in Table XVI (p. 54).

Of the six men who gave "dislike for present duties" as their principal reason, it is considered significant that five had well-above-average G.C.T. scores. The case of J.F.S., an airman, and F.E.G., an airman apprentice, both of whom overstayed their liberty by nine and one-half days, is illustrative:

Both J.F.S. and F.E.G. were class "A" school graduates and designated strikers, one as an aviation electrician's mate and the other as an aviation structural mechanic. J.F.S., nineteen years of age,

TABLE XVI

DISTRIBUTION OF SEVENTEEN UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCES  
INVOLVING NEGATIVE MOTIVATION BY NATURE  
OF COMPLAINT AND BY COMMANDS

Nature of Complaint	Command to which Attached						Total
	M.A.S. and Sqdns.	Nav. Brks.	Major Combat. Ship	D.D.'s	Rec. Sta.		
Dislike for the Navy				1	3		4
Dislike for present station	2	1	3				6
Dislike for present duty	1			1	2		4
Resentment of punishment or administration action				2	1		3
Totals	3	1	3	4	6		17

had served one year and eight months in his first enlistment, had a G.C.T. score of 60, and only one previous offense on his record. Despite their excellent potentialities, both men enjoyed poor reputations for reliability and industry within their command. It appeared that J.P.S. was "working for a bad-conduct discharge," and had persuaded P.H.C. to remain overleve with him.

A similar pairing of two high G.C.T. men was observed on board a large combatant ship, where both men were designated fire-control strikers. For reasons not stated, both men desired a transfer to another type of ship, but this request had been disapproved owing to a

shortage of fire control personnel and the relatively short time these men had served on board. These men, both with previous clear records, overstayed their liberty by nineteen hours, possibly as a dramatic means of bringing their problem to the Commanding Officer's attention, or else with the mistaken idea that they would be transferred as undesirables.

4. Faulty administration or leadership. Only one man, a negro stewardman, gave "inequitable leave policy" as his reason for overstaying his leave. Although the leave policy of the command appeared to be fairly administered, and despite the fact that this man had been granted routine Christmas leave one month previously, he nevertheless maintained that this inequality was his reason for remaining absent.

5. Inaptitude for the Service. In seven cases or 6 percent of the total, inaptitude for the service, either because of gross irresponsibility or gross immaturity, was the evaluation of the cause of unauthorized absence.

Table XVII (p. 56) shows the distribution in each category and by commands.

Strictly speaking, inaptitude is not a reason, but rather an underlying cause of unauthorized absence, for the degree of irresponsibility or immaturity demonstrated by the offender would have to be rather palpable to result in such an evaluation. Clearly, there is an element of irre-

TABLE XVII

DISTRIBUTION OF SEVEN UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCES INVOLVING  
INAPTITUDE FOR THE SERVICE BY REASON FOR  
INAPTITUDE AND BY COMMANDS

Reasons for Inaptitude	Command to which Attached					
	N.A.S. and Sqdns.	Nav. Brks.	Major Combat. Ship	D.D.s	Rec. Sta.	Total
Seasickness						0
Home sickness						0
Immaturity				4		4
Irresponsibility	2			1		3
Totals	2	0	0	5	0	7

responsibility in almost every case of unauthorized absence, and very often a degree of emotional instability as well, but these factors would be considered primary only when the offender's actions offered no other reasonable explanation. The case of D.J.S., a fireman on board a destroyer, is illustrative.

This twenty year old fireman, whose O.C.T. score was 39, and whose record was clear, had served the entire two years of his first enlistment within the continental limits of the United States. Before reassignment to this destroyer in October, he had been granted his entire leave credit of forty days. He joined the ship in December upon her return from nine months' duty in Japan. Christmas leave had been granted to one-third of the crew, with preference going to those

men who had served in the ship throughout the overseas assignment. Without reference to any authority, he went home for the Christmas holidays on the pretext that his mother was ill and needed him at home. Two weeks later he returned to the ship.

6. Miscellaneous reasons. In thirty cases, or 25 percent of the total, various reasons not falling into the foregoing categories were advanced. The details of these cases are shown in Table XVIII.

TABLE XVIII

DISTRIBUTION BY COMMANDS OF THIRTY UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE CASES ATTRIBUTED TO MISCELLANEOUS CAUSES

Miscellaneous Cause	Command to which Attached					Total
	N.A.S. and Sqdns.	Hav. Brks.	Major Combat. Ship	D.D.'s	Rec. Sta.	
Poor planning	2	1	1	2	7	13
Already A.O.L., stayed longer		1	1	5	1	8
Deliberately missed ship or draft					5	5
No reason given				1	3	4
Total	2	2	2	6	16	30

It is noteworthy that poor planning was the most prevalent reason given for overstaying leave or liberty. This excuse was usually advanced by men who had been granted regular leaves or seventy-two hour passes and was

based upon an alleged unreliability of train, plane or bus schedules or the break-down of an automobile. Many other absences of this sort undoubtedly occurred in every command, but only those cases in which the man clearly failed to exercise reasonable planning or foresight resulted in disciplinary action and thus became included in this study. In many cases the offender made insufficient allowance for late trains or busses, or for winter weather conditions along his route. Undoubtedly there were other cases where the offender purposely delayed leaving his home until too late because of an important occasion or engagement, but nevertheless used "late train" as his excuse.

In eight cases men admitted finding themselves overleaves by a few hours and decided to stay longer on the score that punishment would probably not be appreciably greater. This factor was very probably contributory in many of the "drunkenness" or "bad company" cases, even though it may not have been admitted by the offender. The prevalence of this excuse emphasizes the desirability of prompt and lenient treatment of first offenders who are only an hour or two overleaves, to the end that they will not fear the consequences of their offense to an extent that they will prolong their unauthorized absences.

Five men, all of whom were at the Receiving Station for disciplinary reasons, deliberately missed the sailing

of their ships to avoid overseas service. Whether these offenses were prompted by personal emergencies such as strong marital ties, or by an intense dislike of their ship, or by a degree of cowardice, is not known. Two of these five, after being punished for missing the sailing of their ship, deliberately missed the draft which was to return them to their ship, then to Japan.

Four men, three of whom were at the Receiving Station, refused to give any reason for their offense.

#### Summary

1. The reasons ascribed to these cases of absenteeism were influenced by a number of subjective factors, including the truthfulness of the offender and the skill of the evaluator in human relations.
2. There is often no single reason for unauthorized absenteeism; rather, each case is subject to the interaction of various factors which cannot properly be considered in isolation.
3. There is usually an underlying reason for each offense which may bear little apparent relationship to the verbalized or surface reason.
4. The verbalized reason given by the offender may often be little more than a rationalization of his conduct.
5. Personal emergencies, most of which related to marital problems or real or imagined illness in the family, were the reasons given in 20 percent of all offenses.

6. Misconduct while on leave or liberty accounted for 29 percent of all offenses, overindulgence in liquor and association with bad company were the most prevalent forms of misconduct. Drunkenness as an excuse for absenteeism may, however, mask other causes, including a basic lack of adjustment to life in the Service.
7. Dislike for the service, present ship or station, or present duties, contributed heavily to causes related to negative motivation. Many of these cases involved men with well above-average G.C.T. scores.
8. In 5 percent of these cases, the offender was believed to have shown definite inaptitude for the Service because of immaturity or irresponsibility.
9. Poor planning in returning from leave was the third most frequent reason offered for unauthorized absenteeism.
10. Five men, all at the Receiving Station, had deliberately missed the sailing of their ships to avoid overseas duty.

## CHAPTER V

### INTERPRETATION OF DATA AS IT RELATES TO PREVIOUS STUDIES

There has been presented in the previous chapter the data obtained from a survey which was conducted in January and February 1950 at selected shore activities and on board a number of ships. Absenteeism has been discussed in the light of the man's duty station, his offense, his personal characteristics, and the apparent reason for his conduct.

A number of earlier studies were made, principally during World War II, to find the reason for absenteeism and desertion in the Navy during the war. Most of these attacked the problem from a psychiatric viewpoint. Although the offenses were usually more serious than the ones being dealt with in this study, these studies contribute a great deal of useful information toward understanding this problem. A very significant study into absenteeism was also made by the Army during the second World War.<sup>1</sup>

In order to gain a more complete understanding of the basic problem, the data already presented will now be interpreted in the light of these previous studies.

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1. Absence Without Leave. War Department Pamphlet 20-5. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1944.

The Command

From the data already presented, it appeared that unauthorized absence was a more serious problem at the Receiving Station than at any other naval activity studied. The rather limited data presented also suggested that aviation activities had the least trouble with absenteeism, and that destroyers had a higher absentee rate than the air stations, aviation squadrons, and a major combatant ship.

The high absentee rate at any receiving station is readily understandable when its reason for existence is considered. About 80 percent of its population are transients, and the great majority of these are men awaiting reassignment or transportation to other commands. Although every effort is made to move these transients as rapidly as possible by reducing the processing time to a minimum, and although the leave and liberty policies appeared to be both generous and fair, there is inherent in every receiving station the frustrations of an unsettled daily life, a lack of information on next duty, with the distinct possibility that it may be distasteful, and, for men newly returned from overseas duty, an impatience to go on leave and to see family and friends as soon as possible. In addition to these normal temptations for taking unauthorized leaves, receiving stations also have varying numbers of disgruntled men who are awaiting other-than-honorable discharges from the service, and others who have been transferred there for the specific

purpose of standing trial for a previous unauthorized absence offense. It is therefore not surprising that absentee rates among transients was high at this particular receiving station. On the other hand, the corresponding rate for "ship's company" personnel of the same station was low, and compared most favorably with ships and other shore stations.

Based upon the limited data in this study, it would be neither fair nor proper to draw comparisons between individual ships and stations as to relative strength of leadership or morale. The rather consistent agreement of the absentee rates of the seven destroyers and those of the five aviation activities suggests, however, that certain fundamental factors account for the lower rates of absenteeism within the aviation activities. It is considered probable that the uniformly excellent station facilities for barracks and recreation, together with the predictability and certainty of leave and liberty, are stabilizing influences which cannot be matched by the destroyers, where living spaces are cramped, recreation facilities are few, and leave and liberty are subject to interruption or cancellation by operating schedules. Moreover, the men attached to these aviation activities did not encounter protracted tours of overseas rotational duty and the attending separations from home, family and friends, as was the case among the destroyer crews.

Other studies reflected similar differences among various arms and services, ships and stations, and among

units themselves. The Army<sup>1</sup> found that absentee rates during World War II varied widely among the branches of the service. The highest rates were encountered by infantry, cavalry, coast artillery and engineer units, while the lowest rates were in the Ordnance Department, Signal Corps, and Air Corps. This information was based upon a study of all absence offenses exceeding five days' duration which occurred during May and June, 1943. The esprit which accompanies membership in an elite group perhaps accounts in part for the differences found.

The offender's attitude toward his unit has also been examined in the light of its probable relationship to unauthorized absence offenses. The Army study<sup>2</sup> also noted that 56 percent of all absence offenders expressed no positive feeling of pride of unit, while only 30 percent of a cross-section of the Army expressed that sentiment. Seventy-eight percent of flight personnel and rangers, however, expressed a strong pride of unit.

Otness and Stouffer<sup>3</sup> found, among fifteen hundred offenders at a naval disciplinary barracks, that only 45 percent expressed a positive like of the Navy and only 37 percent a positive liking for their last duty stations.

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1. Absence Without Leave, War Dept. Pamphlet 20-5, p. 4.

2. Ibid., p. 5-6.

3. H. R. Otness and G. A. W. Stouffer, Jr. "Naval Offenders; Motivating Factors." U. S. Navy Medical Bulletin 44:1029-35, May 1945.

The Navy's Corrective Services Branch<sup>1</sup> found in a recent study that only 34 percent of five hundred offenders liked their last ship or station. Forty-one percent expressed an active dislike and the remainder voiced neither a positive nor a negative sentiment about their previous duty station. As might be expected, however, the number of men serving sentences in naval prisons who would express a sentiment of liking for a ship or station from which they had gone overleave would be far smaller than at any other naval activity.

#### The Offense

Because this study confined itself to absence offenses of shorter duration than thirty days and eliminated from consideration those offenses of less than twelve hours' duration, the mean length of absence was considerably less than that found in other studies of desertion and overleave. For sake of comparison, the results of two of these studies will be summarized.

Among a group of one thousand court-martial prisoners who were serving sentences for desertion or overleave offenses during World War II, Locke, Cornsweet, Bromberg, and Apuzzo<sup>2</sup> found the following:

(a) Of the entire group, 75.8 percent were absent over leave

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1. See Appendix "B."

2. B. Locke, et al., "A Study of 1063 Naval Offenders," U. S. Navy Medical Bulletin, 44:73-86, Jan. 1945.

or liberty and 24.2 percent were absent without leave.

(b) The mean duration of A.O.L. offenses was 33.09 days, of A.W.O.L. offenses 36.25 days, and for the entire group, 33.83 days.

(c) The medians of these distributions showed 15.93 days for the A.O.L. group; 23.20 days for the A.W.O.L.'s; and 16.23 days for the entire group.

(d) This group's unauthorized absences amounted to the direct loss to the Navy of ninety man-years.

(e) Of these one thousand offenses, 69.2 percent were of shorter duration than thirty days.

The study made by the Corrective Services Branch of the Navy during November 1948<sup>1</sup> indicated the following:

(a) In a random sample of five hundred absence offenders, 60 percent had been absent over liberty, 18 percent absent over leave, and 20 percent absent without leave.

(b) In the cases of those men who had been absent over liberty, the average amount of liberty requested was forty hours, the average amount granted was twenty-nine hours and an average of twenty-eight hours had been used up when the offender knew that he would not return on time.

(c) In the cases of those men who were on authorized leave (except emergency leave) the average number of days requested and days granted was eighteen. An average of eighteen days had been used up when the offender knew that he would not

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1. See Appendix "B."

return on time. Only 20 percent of this group requested extensions of their leaves.

(d) In the cases of those men who were on emergency leaves, an average of twenty-four days was requested; sixteen days granted; and twenty-two days had elapsed before the offender realized that his extension would not be granted.

(e) Of the men who went A.W.O.L., 58 percent stated that they had requested leave or liberty that was denied. In 36 percent of these cases of denials, the offender claimed that no reason for such disapproval was given. Sixty-four percent of those who had requested leave or special liberty did not make their requests in writing.

The fact that 68 percent of the offenses in this study involved absence over liberty, 18 percent absence over leave, and 14 percent absence without leave is indicative of the same general trend as was found in the Corrective Services Report. It appears from both these studies that the great majority of offenders drift into unauthorized absenteeism rather than premeditate their actions. This suggests the explanation that a fundamental lack of attachment on the part of the offender to his ship or station and a lack of motivation for his present duties often accounts for absenteeism, although there is a strong and troublesome minority whose adjustment to their present environment is so poor that absenteeism is premeditated and contagious.

#### The Offender

Earlier in this study a number of personal charac-

teristics of the typical offender were examined in relation to unauthorized absence. These and some others will now be reexamined in the light of previous studies.

1. G.C.T. Score. Men with below-average G.C.T. scores (less than 45), although constituting only 33.3 percent of the entire Navy, contributed 45 percent of the 122 offenses in this study. The Army<sup>1</sup> found during the war that 61 percent of all absence offenders were in the two lowest groupings of A.G.C.T. scores (lowest 35 percent of Army distribution). This distribution is probably best explained by the wartime draft, which brought into the Army many men of low basic intelligence. Because these men were slow to grasp the fundamentals of life in the military, they were likely to go A.W.O.L. unless they were skillfully and patiently led by their officers.

2. Level of education. Closely related to achievement on General Classification Test is level of education, which, although not previously included in this survey, bears brief mentioning.

Locke, Cornsweet, Bromberg, and Apuzzo<sup>2</sup>, in their study of 1063 Naval prisoners during World War II, found that the average level of schooling of this group was 9.3 grades, the median 8.45 grades, that thirty-four men had some college education, and that 719 had gone beyond grade

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1. Absence Without Leave, p. 1.

2. B. Locke, et al., op.cit., p.75-80.

school. Only nineteen men were found to be of border-line or deficient intelligence. This study supported the conclusion that almost none of this group had become delinquent because of insufficient intellectual endowment. However, the fact that one-half this group had not completed a ninth grade education is considered significant.

The Army study<sup>1</sup> during World War II indicated that poorly educated soldiers presented special problems relating to absenteeism. It was found that 52 percent of all A.W.O.L.'s had not gone beyond the eighth grade in school, whereas only 33 percent of all soldiers fell into that category. On the other hand, although 39 percent of all soldiers were high school graduates, this group committed only 16 percent of all A.W.O.L. offenses.

The Corrective Services Study<sup>2</sup> also lends support to this trend. Of five hundred naval prisoners serving sentences for unauthorized absenteeism, only 13 percent were found to be high school graduates.

This evidence, when considered in conjunction with G.C.T. scores, indicated that men with low G.C.T. scores and limited education (grade school education or less) would contribute a higher proportion of unauthorized absence offenses than their relative strength in the service would indicate.

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1. Absence Without Leave, p. 1-2.

2. See Appendix "B."

It also suggests the conclusion that closer attention and personalized leadership must be given to these men, who, because of their lower intelligence, are less capable of understanding their role in any military organization.

3. Age. The results of this survey indicated that, in the post-war Navy at least, over one-half of the offenders were over twenty-one years of age. This supported the conclusion that absenteeism could not be attributed entirely to chronological immaturity or boyish irresponsibility.

During the war, the studies of Locks, Cornsweet, Bromberg, and Apuzzo<sup>1</sup> showed a trend toward somewhat younger offenders. In their study of 1000 unauthorized absence offenders, the median age was 19.6 $\frac{1}{4}$  and the mean, 21.55 years. Forty-five percent of all offenders were over twenty-one years of age. It is apparent, therefore, that immaturity in years was not a significant factor in absenteeism even during the war.

4. Length of service. The results of this study indicated that over one-half of the 122 offenders had served almost three years in the Navy, and that the highest absentee rate occurred during the second year of naval service.

Otness and Stouffer<sup>2</sup> found that the average length of service of offenders serving sentences at the Receiving Station Norfolk, during the war was a little over twelve

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1. B. Locks, et al., op.cit., p.75-78.

2. Otness and Stouffer, op.cit., p.1030 ff.

months, or men just starting their second year of service.

Special conditions existing during wartime account for different absentee trends in relation to length of service. The studies of Locke, Cornsweet, Bromberg, and Spuzak<sup>1</sup> indicated that absentee rates were very high during the third, fourth, and fifth months of service, which would correspond to the period following recruit training and preceding first sea or overseas duty. The rate then dropped off until the ninth month, when some of these men had returned to the United States for the first time after a taste of sea duty or action, and felt entitled to more leave than could be granted.

5. Pay Grade. In this study, 78 percent of the offenders were found to be non-rated men, and therefore in the lowest three pay grades. Moreover, 53 percent were in pay grade E-3 alone.

Corrective Services Study<sup>2</sup> indicated that 75 percent of the five hundred offenders surveyed were in the three lowest pay grades at the time of their last offense.

Because of their greater stake in the Navy as a career and the more serious regard in which unauthorized absence offenses of Petty Officers are held by most Commanding Officers, it is hardly surprising that less than one-quarter

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1. B. Locke, et al., op.cit., p.77 ff.

2. See Appendix "B."

of all offenders would be petty officers.

The high incidence of offenders in pay grade E-3 (seamen, airmen, firemen, etc.) has already been attributed to a number of motivational factors such as discouragement over non-advancement, or lack of qualification or ambition to become a petty officer.

6. Previous offenses. Of the 122 cases studied, only 34 percent had clear records. Sixty-nine of those whose records were not clear had committed one or more previous offenses involving unauthorized absence.

The Army study<sup>1</sup> indicated that 64 percent of all A.W.O.L. offenders were "repeaters" who had gone "over the hill" at least once before. Similarly, the studies of Locke, Cornsweet, Bromberg, and Apuzzo<sup>2</sup> showed that 54 percent of the one thousand naval offenders who were serving sentences for overleaves offenses had been court-martialled for previous offenses. Furthermore, 72 percent of the five hundred cases studied in the Corrective Services Report<sup>3</sup> were "repeaters." The relatively low percentage of first offenders in naval prisons is probably explained by the leniency which would be exercised by convening or reviewing authorities in court-martial cases involving first offenders. It is unlikely that confinement in a naval prison would be adjudged in such cases unless the transgression was of a most serious nature.

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1. Absence Without Leave, p. 2.

2. B. Locke, et al., op.cit., p. 75 ff.

3. See Appendix "B."

It would appear, nevertheless, that the "repeater" is definitely a poorer absentee risk than the man with a clear record. This might be explained by the attitude of indifference which is often found among repeaters, who no longer have the incentive or the protection which a clear record affords them.

7. Broken service enlistments. The special problems created by men serving under "broken-service" enlistments are peculiar to the post-war Navy. Although evidence from other sources is lacking, the tentative conclusion is nevertheless advanced that broken service men, notably in the pay grade E-3, are definitely poorer risks as far as absenteeism rates are concerned than men serving under continuous service conditions.

8. Family background and early home training. The nature of this survey did not permit the gathering of reliable information on the family background or early home training of the 122 offenders considered in this study. The relationship between these factors and fundamental adjustment to life in the service has, however, received careful consideration by several psychiatrists who studied this problem among naval offenders during the war, and some conclusions from their reports have an important bearing on this study.

As a result of their studies of 1500 offenders at the Receiving Station, Norfolk, Virginia, during the latter part of the war, Otness and Stouffer<sup>1</sup> observed:

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1. Otness and Stouffer, op.cit., p.1030 ff.

The potency of childhood and family background in shaping the personality cannot be overlooked. The solidarity of a good home reflects itself in the stability of its members. The insecurities of childhood produce instabilities in adult life. Broken homes, divorced parents and mistreatment place an indelible mark on children, and are common background findings among delinquents. A study of civilian delinquents showed 78 percent with fathers living, 63 percent with mothers living, and 22 percent with parents divorced, in contrast to a non-delinquent group having 93 percent fathers living, 90 percent mothers and only 4 percent divorced. The problems of the large indigent family, the farm boy needed at home, the subtle implications of the "only child," the over protected home, the child from orphanage or foster-home, all create potent attitudes in the individual and give them life-long frustrations.

In another study of naval offenders at the Naval Barracks, Yerba Buena Island, Bonhag<sup>1</sup> concludes:

Usually these men originated in homes that were broken, dislocated and burdened with strife. The routine history revealed poverty, lack of security, neglect in infancy and childhood and continued lack of affection later, difficulties in school and on the job, and in the community. These men have records of shifting jobs and numerous arrests and apprehensions. When a difficulty arises, they seem to be able to do only one thing -- run away. That was their reaction also in the Naval Service.

Any discussion of unauthorized absence during the immediate post-war years must also take into account the wartime environment in which the great majority of current offenders were reared. The age distribution of offenders in this study has already shown that 85 percent of all offenders were between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five, with a median of exactly twenty-one years. When war broke out in December 1941, one-half of all these offenders were

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1. L. D. Bonhag, "Psychiatric Evaluation of the Naval Delinquent," U.S. Navy Medical Bulletin 47:458-472, May-June, 1947.

therefore under twelve years of age. In many cases, the father spent the war years in the armed services in which event the boy grew up in a matricentric, and possibly a relatively unsupervised, environment. On the other hand, it is quite probable that at least the father, and in many cases both parents, were actively engaged in war production work which left little time for supervision of the children. The war years were an era of full employment, high wages and lowered moral standards. Even a teen-age boy could earn wages on a part time job which would have been envied by the full-time worker before the war. The immediate post-war years have been characterized by organized labor's demands for forty-eight hours' pay for forty hours work and by tremendous raids on the public treasury conducted by, or in behalf of, the veterans. It is therefore not surprising that many post war youths have rather a firm conviction that the world owes them a living -- and an old-age pension, too.

9. Truancy. There appears to be some agreement among psychologists who have studied absenteeism in the services that the offender's record of truancy and his attitude toward school have a significant bearing on his later conduct in the service. The Army study<sup>1</sup> indicated that 77 percent of all A.W.O.L.'s distinctly disliked going to school and often "played hooky." This contrasts with only 47 percent among

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1. Absence Without Leave, p. 4.

average recruits and 50 percent among mental patients in Army hospitals.

Locke, Cornsweet, Bromberg, and Apuzzo<sup>1</sup>, in their study of 1000 unauthorized absentees offenders found that 42 percent of that group admitted academic delinquencies of some sort, including 32 percent who played hookey, 6.4 percent who had been expelled from one or more schools, 2.2 percent who had been suspended once or more, and 1.4 percent who had been admitted to truant schools. The authors advanced the following conclusion:

Since the type of behavior involved in truancy parallels that found in unauthorized absence from the Navy, it is interesting to note the high incidence of truancy in the sample studied. It tends to indicate that the activities of many of these men conform to patterns of behavior established long before any contact with service life.

10. Psychiatric disorders. Although it might be convenient to ascribe absenteeism to some latent but troublesome psychiatric disorder in the offender, the great majority of unauthorized absence offenders whose cases were studied during the war showed no history or clinical evidence which would classify them as medical problems. Locke, Cornsweet, Bromberg, and Apuzzo<sup>2</sup> found the following distribution of psychiatric findings among 1000 offenders:

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1. B. Locke, et al., op.cit., p. 73 ff.

2. Ibid., p. 75 ff.

No disease	78.1%
Psychopathic personality	8.2
Psychoneuroses	7.2
Chronic alcoholism	2.9
Mental deficiency	1.9
Neurologic disorders	1.2
Psychoses	0.5

The findings of Boshes<sup>1</sup> among 2046 disciplinary cases at Yerba Buena Island was substantially in agreement. Of this group 77.5 percent were classified as having "no disease."

In the peacetime Navy, with selected enlistment of volunteers, and high recruiting standards, the percentage of offenders with psychiatric disorders would be expected to be far smaller. Although no figures are available to substantiate this, it seems probable that something less than 10 percent of all peacetime unauthorized absence offenders would be considered mentally ill, and that this number would be confined largely to the chronic "repeaters" and the deserters. A higher incidence of men with neuro-psychiatric diagnoses is, of course, to be expected during wartime, when some men having no aptitude for military service are drafted into the Navy, and when the difficult problem of adjustment is complicated both by fear of combat service and by anxiety over home affairs.

II. Attitudes toward the service, duty station and superiors.  
The attitude of the offender toward the Navy and his ship or

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1. Boshes, op.cit., p. 460 ff.

station have an important bearing upon absenteeism. Some of these factors have already been discussed in relation to the types of commands which contributed relatively high absentee rates. Slightly different from those considerations, however, are those relating to the attitude of the offender toward the Navy and his duty station.

In their studies of 1500 naval offenders at the Receiving Station, Herfolk, during the war, Otness and Stouffer<sup>1</sup> concluded:

About 87 percent of the naval offenders indicated that they liked the Navy, leaving 13 percent who disliked it. This latter group may be a serious one in influencing the attitudes of others. That 27.5 percent did not like their duty indicates the need for some effort at more appropriate assignment. The 26.6 percent of offenders who feel they are not getting along in the Navy are those unhappy at their work, inefficient, and on their way to becoming chronic offenders through discouragement.

The Army study<sup>2</sup> indicated that 56 percent of all A.W.O.L.'s expressed no positive feeling of pride of unit, whereas only 30 percent of all soldiers and 22 percent of flight personnel and rangers expressed this attitude.

The attitude of absence offenders toward their officers furnishes another important insight into the motives for their conduct. In the Corrective Services Study<sup>3</sup> of five hundred naval prisoners serving sentences for unauthorized absences, 62 percent expressed a feeling that their

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1. Otness and Stouffer, op.cit., p.1030 ff.

2. Absence Without Leave, p. 5-7.

3. See Appendix "B."

officers were not interested, and only 24 percent thought that their officers were interested, in the personal affairs of their men. Furthermore, thirty-seven of these five hundred prisoners stated that it was this negative attitude and indifference on the part of their officers that constituted the principal reason for their going overleave.

The Army study<sup>1</sup> also produced some interesting evidence with respect to enlisted men's attitudes toward their officers during World War II. The conclusions of this study were:

- (a) The percentage of men who stated that few or none of the officers of their company were the kind they would like to serve under in combat was 53 percent for A.W.O.L.'s as opposed to 24 percent in an Army cross-section and 14 percent among flight personnel and rangers.
- (b) Forty-six percent of A.W.O.L.'s thought that few or none of their officers were the kind who were willing to go through anything they asked their men to go through. Only 21 percent of an Army cross-section and 12 percent of flight personnel or rangers expressed this attitude.
- (c) Fifty percent of all A.W.O.L.'s thought that few or none of their officers took a personal interest in their men, whereas only 28 percent of an Army cross-section and 17 percent of flight personnel and rangers expressed this opinion.

It is axiomatic that many of the attitudes of enlisted men are a direct reflection on the officers under whom they serve. These attitudes have an important relationship upon the enlisted man's adjustment to life in the service, and unless this adjustment is actively promoted by the man's officers, unauthorized absenteeism is a likely

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1. Absence Without Leave, p. 7.

consequence.

12. Racial considerations. In this study the distribution of offenders by race did not show an unduly large number of negro offenders provided that those cases which occurred at a Naval Barracks having 55 percent negroes were excluded. The number of negro offenders in the remaining commands was only 4.2 percent of the total, as compared with a ratio of 4.4 percent among all Navy enlisted men. Among one thousand naval prisoners serving sentences during the war for desertion or overleave, however, Locke, Cornsweet, Bromberg, and Apusao<sup>1</sup> found that 7.9 percent were negroes.

From two and one-half years experience in a command having over 50 percent negroes, the writer has reached the following tentative conclusions concerning negro overleave offenders:

- (a) Short overleave offenses, (one-half to six hours' duration) usually involving oversleeping, liquor or bad company, are very prevalent, particularly after pay days.
- (b) Death or illness of relatives, often of quite remote relationship in the accepted sense, furnish strong motivation for absenteeism if leave requests are not very carefully and sympathetically handled.
- (c) Negroes, particularly those from the southern states, feel a strong sense of dependence toward their officers.

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1. Locke, et al., op.cit., p. 73 ff.

They are highly responsive to good leadership, and expect their officers to take a sincere and sympathetic interest in their troubles.

(d) Their tolerance to frustrations arising from real or imagined injustices is quite low. An uncorrected injustice, often quite trivial, furnishes strong motivation for absenteeism.

(e) Irresponsibility in safeguarding funds and transportation tickets, and poor planning of return transportation, are very prevalent factors in absenteeism among negro personnel returning from leave.

#### Surface Reasons vs. Underlying Causes

Earlier in this study, the reason for each of the 122 cases of unauthorized absenteeism, as stated by the offender and as evaluated by his superiors, was catalogued and summarised. It was recognized that errors of several kinds would be introduced when dealing with factors so subjective as reasons for absenteeism. Among these sources of error were:

- (a) The truthfulness of the reason given by the offender.
- (b) The skill of the evaluator and his knowledge of the offender.
- (c) The difficulty of isolating any one cardinal reason.
- (d) The difficulty of uncovering the offender's basic or underlying motive; often one which he himself may not know, or which he will not admit.

There appears to be general agreement among psychiatrists who have studied the problem of absenteeism and desertion in the Navy during the war that the reasons given by men for going overleave varied widely from the true psychologic activation. The reasons given by the men themselves have been regarded, psychologically, as rationalizations or "surface reasons," while the inner emotional sources of their behavior as psychological formulations or "underlying reasons." The wide gap between surface and underlying causes may be accounted for in a number of ways; perhaps to gain sympathy or leniency, to deceive, to mask feelings of guilt, or to rationalize. It becomes evident, therefore, that in the final analysis we must look to the psychiatrist to explain the inner motivation for the types of aberrant behavior which constitutes unauthorized absenteeism.

In their wartime study of one thousand unauthorized absenteeism offenders, Bromberg, Apusso, and Lockel advanced the conclusion that, among the psychiatrically "normal" group of 782 men, there were two basic formulations which accounted for absence over leave. One of these was an anxiety reaction induced by frustrations of some sort, including antagonism toward authority and discipline, marital or home problems, feelings of inferiority and "separation anxiety." The other formulation was based on personality attitudes and deficiencies in the make-up of the offender,

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1. W. Bromberg, A. A. Apusso, and B. Lockel, "A Psychologic Study of Desertion and Overleaves in the Navy," U. S. Navy Medical Bulletin 44:556-568; March, 1945.

such as emotional and social immaturity, a willful, negative attitude toward the Navy, an egocentric character, an open expression of antagonism toward authority, and adolescent rebelliousness.

The authors of the above study made the following conclusions:

We found in this series that the basic problem in the personality of men who go overleave is a combination of dependence needs and antagonism toward authority on which fear reacts to produce untoward behavior. -- Emotional immaturity, which dips into marked passive dependence on the parents and home, usually symbolized by the mother, provides the neurotic background which turns normal fear into flight and dissatisfaction into desertion.

These cases have shown a wide range and combination of dependence needs and antagonisms in each individual offender. It can be said, from our experience, that no desertion occurs without an anti-authoritarian attitude, open or hidden, existing along with a need for protection and dependence, whether covered by anxiety or compensated for by toughness.

Admittedly, those officers who are responsible for the administration of discipline cannot, under ordinary circumstances, take into account the underlying psychological motivations of unauthorized absences. However, time and good leadership are potent forces in combating the types of emotional immaturity that prompts young and immature men to go overleave, and it is in the field of better leadership that a large measure of the solution lies.

## CHAPTER VI

### CURES FOR UNAUTHORIZED ABSENTEEISM

In the preceding two chapters an attempt has been made to show what types of men commit unauthorized absence and why they do so. It has been seen that absenteeism is an extremely costly matter to the Navy and by far its most serious disciplinary problem. The theory has been advanced that certain factors in the pre-service personal histories of some types of men predispose them toward committing unauthorized absence offenses. Some of these are poor environment and family background, a record of truancy in school and a below-average level of formal education, each of which seems to render more difficult the problem of adjusting the individual to life in the service. These factors, however, do not produce absenteeism; they merely make it more likely to occur under certain circumstances and in certain commands.

Manifestly, there is no pat answer and no magic cure which will reduce, overnight, a high absentee rate. There are, however, a number of measures closely associated with good leadership and high morale which are of proven worth in combatting it. There are other measures relating to recruiting, selection and placement, and to punishment,

which are also of importance. These factors will now be discussed in some detail under the following headings: (1) Recruiting, (2) Indoctrination, (3) Classification and Placement, (4) Leadership and Command Attention, (5) Recreation, (6) Screening of Misfits, and (7) Punishment.

### Recruiting

Recruiting, if it can be sufficiently selective, is a fundamental means of reducing absenteeism because it can deny enlistment to those types of men who, because of their emotional immaturity or their low level of intelligence, are more likely to be chronic offenders. From a practical standpoint, however, this is not always possible. During the depression years of the 1930's, for example, recruiting was highly selective, whereas during the war and immediate post-war years, the Navy accepted almost any man who could meet the age and physical requirements.

Selective recruiting in peacetime serves other far more important objectives than reducing absenteeism, however. During the past war, it has been estimated<sup>1</sup> that 92 percent of all chief and first-class petty officers serving in the Navy on 7 December 1941 became temporary or permanent commissioned officers during the course of the war. Far more than recruiting seamen and airmen, therefore, the recruiter in peacetime is in reality selecting men who will become officers and senior petty

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1. Statement by R.Adm. H. W. Martin, U.S.Navy, address at Stanford University 17 February 1950.

officers in the event that war comes.

Recruiting is, of necessity, a matter of filling quotas, and it is not always possible or even desirable to turn down young men who meet the basic physical and mental requirements. However, when a choice exists, it would be well to show preference to:

- (a) Recent high school graduates.
- (b) Applicants having a good home environment.
- (c) Applicant with records of little or no truancy in school.

During wartime or other periods when recruiting cannot be selective, probably the only measures which can be applied are those of neuropsychiatric screening of men with definite personality disorders, and elimination of men of extremely sub-normal intelligence.

#### Naval Indoctrination

Indoctrination, as used here, refers not just to the relatively short period that the recruit spends at a recruit training center. It includes, rather, the entire period during which he is making his adjustment to life in the service. It therefore, covers the period he spends at a service school and his first few months onboard ship or at his first permanent duty station in addition to his recruit training.

Bromberg, Apusso and Locke<sup>1</sup> hold the opinion that emotional immaturity is an important underlying reason for

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1. Bromberg, Apusso, and Locke, op.cit., p.558 ff.

unauthorized absenteeism, and that this type of immaturity has two important counter forces; time and the support of new figures in the environment. They conclude that:

The tempering of the average man, i.e., his adjustment to military service, goes on gradually during his first year or so of military life. Modifications of old values, supplanting the emotional ties by new bonds, and the gradual submerging of the individual's personality, become perceptible as the average recruit develops into a fighting man.

These authorities suggested, during the wartime situation in which their study was made, that a longer period of recruit training and indoctrination appeared to be the best way of modifying the noticeable dependence needs of so many recruits.

Otness and Stouffer<sup>1</sup> point out that during the recruit's early months in the service, the Navy becomes a father substitute. Many young recruits in a peacetime Navy whose patterns of delinquency were not too firmly established were taken in hand by experienced officers and petty officers and gradually melded into useful, well-trained and disciplined man-of-war's-men. Unfortunately, during wartime, there was not always time for this gradual but nevertheless effective method of conditioning.

The fact that this survey uncovered very few offenses by men having less than one year's service tends to indicate that indoctrination at the recruit level is, at the present time, highly effective. Furthermore, many

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1. Otness and Stouffer, op.cit., p.1030 ff.

stations and ships, particularly the larger ones, make it a practice to conduct formal "recruit training programs" for the benefit of those men who report on board directly from recruit training stations. On one major combatant ship, the program consisted of a curriculum of forty recruit training lessons which included orientation lectures and movies, tours of the ship, indoctrination in ships regulations, and instructions in watch-standing and safety precautions. During this training period, the recruit was gradually worked into the ship's organization, but his final classification and assignment to duty was not made until the end of the training period.

#### Classification and Placement

A cross-section of absenteeism studies showed that between fifteen and thirty percent of all offenders considered that they had been misclassified or mis assigned in their Navy jobs. Granting that a substantial proportion of these statements were fabrications, there are undoubtedly a substantial number of men whose abilities are not being utilized to the Navy's best advantage and to the optimum satisfaction of the individual.

The Navy's job classification system and the resulting entries that are placed in the individual's service record provide the basic information for job placement. Unfortunately, the information may not always be used intelligently, with the result that the square peg is forced into

the round hole, and a potential source of dissatisfaction is created. Over a period of time this dissatisfaction breeds negative motivational attitudes, and absenteeism is one of the commonest consequences.

Career planning for enlisted men is an important post-war development in the Navy.<sup>1</sup> It provides clearly-defined channels for advancement to petty officer specialties and rating groups, and for eventual promotion to the warrant or commissioned grades. It seeks to place each recruit in the broad line of work for which he appears best qualified. Men having high G.C.T. scores or special aptitudes are sent to class "A" service schools immediately after recruit training, and become designated "strikers" for a particular rating. Others are encouraged to single out, at their duty station or on board ship, the rating group in which their interests lie and to qualify for advancement thereto by means of on-the-job training programs. It becomes an important responsibility of officers, particularly at the divisional or platoon level, to encourage and assist their men in planning their careers, utilising to the fullest degree the classification information and test scores available in the individual's record. A well-motivated man is usually a satisfied man, and a strong source of discontentment that may become manifest in ab-

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1. Training Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel, "Career Planning for Enlisted Men," U. S. Navy Training Bulletin (NavPers 14966), June 1948, p. 2-10.

sentecism is thus removed at its source.

#### Leadership and Command Attention

One of the most significant findings of the Corrective Services Survey<sup>1</sup> was that sixty-two percent of all unauthorized absence offenders thought that most of their officers were not interested in the personal affairs of the men under them, and another fourteen percent thought their officers to be only mildly interested. In other words, less than one man in four among this group of prisoners thought that his former officers had taken a genuine interest in his personal problems.

This rather blunt criticism emphasizes the unchanging truth of a key principle of leadership: Know your men.

Colonel E. C. B. Danforth, U.S. Army,<sup>2</sup> who was Sgt. Alvin York's Commanding Officer in World War I, summarizes this principle as follows:

The vast majority of A.S.O.L.'s could be prevented if company commanders would take the time to know their men, gain an understanding of their problems, and assist them in solving them without delay. This is not just a question of one meeting with a man. It involves sufficiently frequent contacts to gain real insight into the problems that cause him anxiety.

It is no excuse for a company commander to say that he has no time to do this. He must make the time. This

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1. See Appendix "B."

2. Absence Without Leave, p. 11.

is one responsibility that the successful company commander must not delegate.

A recent text book on Naval Leadership<sup>1</sup> summarizes the importance of this principle in the following words:

The first step in successfully handling men is to get to know them. First of all, you must know their names. Learn to recognize every man and speak to him by name. After you have done this, begin to learn all you can about each man, Is he married? Does he have any children? Does he help support his mother or brother? What personal worries does he have? What part of the country does he come from? What are his ambitions? These are but a few of the things you should know about each man. Make it your business to know everything you can learn about each of your men, so you will know his limitations and capabilities.

During the war, as the techniques and weapons of modern naval warfare increased in complexity, it is felt that there was a tendency to over-emphasize technical competence in young officers. They attended numerous schools in radar, C.I.C., damage control, anti-aircraft gunnery and so forth, with emphasis on competence in operation of equipment. Too little attention, it is thought, was given in their training to an understanding of a far more complex mechanism -- the men serving under them. To remedy this, the curriculum at the U.S. Naval Academy now includes a formalised course in leadership in which the subject is studied from its psychological aspects and which stresses conference techniques in discussing leadership problems. On board ship and within aircraft squadrons, however, it appears that more attention should continue to be given

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1. Naval Leadership, p. 216, Annapolis, Md., U.S. Naval Institute, 1949.

to the fundamental principles of leadership.

One technique which is useful to division officers in getting to know their men is the patterned interview. A sample is included in Appendix "C." By means of ten-minute interviews, the division officer can, in a relatively short period of weeks, personally talk to each of his men, giving attention first to the younger and newer men and to the men who seem to get into trouble. The system employed by many division officers is to keep a loose-leaf note book or card index on which key data from the service record and interview of each man is recorded. This interview and record technique serves the two-fold purpose of not only giving the officer some insight into his men's problems, but also of convincing the man himself of the officer's sincere interest in him and a feeling of concern for his welfare. This interview technique has been stressed in the Army's training of company commanders, and many successful Army officers have attributed the negligible absentee rate in their units to the fact that they have taken the time and trouble to know their men. An Army pamphlet<sup>1</sup> on this subject states:

It is especially important to remember that the soldiers each officer must get to know best are the least intelligent and poorest educated men in his outfit. They are the ones who are likely to cause him the greatest amount of trouble. They are the ones who usually are not smart enough to solve their own problems by themselves, and are most likely to

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1. Absence Without Leave, p. 12.

go "over the hill" because they can think of no other way out. An officer will probably find them hardest to understand because they are least like him. On the other hand, once an officer has gained the confidence and respect of such men, they are likely to be his most faithful and devoted followers.

A corollary to the important feature of officers knowing their men is that of helping their men to handle their personal problems. It has been seen earlier in this study that domestic and marital troubles were the stated reason for 15 percent of the offenders' going overleave. Probably no amount of sympathetic handling would have eliminated all of these cases, but it would very possibly have reduced the number.

Enlisted men seldom seek the advice of officers in whom they lack confidence or who they feel lack interest in their welfare. The rapport must first be established. Moreover, when the man brings a problem to his division officer, the latter must know in general terms, at least, what facilities are available for solving it. He must be familiar with the scope of the social services available from the Red Cross, Navy Relief, and community welfare agencies. Perhaps, too many officers feel that such advice should come only from the Chaplain, whereas it is, first and foremost, a line problem of leadership. Some of the serious problems may have to be referred to the Chaplain, of course, but the great majority of them can and should be solved at the division officer level.

Volumes have been written on the subject of leadership and morale, and there can be little doubt that the factors which make for good morale also eliminate many of the causes of unauthorized absenteeism. A few of the more tangible factors seem to be fairness; an intelligent concern for the creature comforts of their men; a planned policy of keeping the men informed of what is going on, why it is being done, and what is to come; and the judicious use of praise and recognition for jobs well done. While the omission of any one of these factors will rarely become a compelling reason for a man's going overleave, their importance cannot be over emphasized. These factors contribute so much to morale because they eliminate many of the insecurities from the daily lives of the men. Furthermore, they give to each member of the group a cohesive sense of "belonging" and a feeling of personal importance to his ship and his division, both of which are conspicuously absent among those men who go overleave.

#### Recreation

Recreation programs that are conducted with an intelligent concern for the welfare of the ship or station complement can operate to reduce absenteeism in a number of ways. First, by providing wholesome leisure-time activities, it is believed that many temptations will be removed from the paths of the younger men, some of whom feel that a respectable degree of intoxication while on liberty

is the mark of a "real" sailor. Leisure-time activities must, of course, be adapted to the physical facilities and resources of the ship or station. The problem at a large air station having a well-equipped gym and swimming pool, hobby shop, enlisted men's clubs, bowling alleys, movie theater and soda fountains differs greatly from that on a destroyer or a submarine. Nevertheless, the problem of the profitable use of leisure time is common to both activities.

A second factor is the role of athletics, which again must depend upon the facilities available. The cardinal purpose should, it is felt, be maximum participation, so that one program may benefit as many men as possible, not just one "varsity" team. The ship or station team can be a strong rallying point around which pride of unit can be built, but broadest possible participation is still to be sought whenever possible.

The optimum use of leisure time, whether it be sight-seeing tours in a foreign port, team athletics, a sports program, group activities, hobby programs, a cribbage tournament or reading a good book, is believed to be an important factor in reducing absenteeism.

#### Screening of Misfits

The studies of Locke, Cornsweet, Bromberg, and Apuzzo<sup>1</sup> showed that 21.9 percent of a group of one thousand

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1. Locke, et al., op.cit., p. 73 ff.

overleaves offenders during the war presented demonstrable neuro-psychiatric disorders. It was observed that these individuals were not suitable Navy material and would have to be discharged eventually because they would be a continual source of trouble, not only because of their own inability to adjust, but also because of the difficulties which they would probably cause among their shipmates.

Because chronic absenteeism is, according to these authorities, one of the manifestations of neuro-psychiatric disorders, frequent unexplained overleaves may well be grounds for a neuro-psychiatric referral to the medical department. Boshes<sup>1</sup> observes the following with respect to medical discharges of chronic overleaves offenders:

Traditionally there will be some opposition to the [medical] discharge of individuals who have had disciplinary charges brought against them, as the feeling exists in some lay and professional quarters that prisoners receiving such a discharge are "getting away with something." Whether punishment should or should not be avoided is not the important point here. The question is whether . . . [it] will be of any value to this man, the Navy, or to his home community later. The type of individual who reacts well to naval discipline and punishment is no different from the individual who reacts well to civilian discipline and punishment. . . . No amount of discipline or punishment can effectively act as a corrective where there is not a sense of responsibility, an ability to learn by experience, or a desire for future security. . . . If repeated punishment in the past has failed to correct a chronic delinquent, then it is scarcely to be expected that disciplinary effort, time and expense expended during a national emergency will be successful.

It is believed that these same general considerations

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1. Boshes, op.cit., p. 458 ff.

apply in equal measure to the administrative separation of men who have demonstrated an inaptitude for the service, or those whose accumulation of minor offenses render them undesirable for retention. The relative merits of ridding the service of these types of men or of disciplining them, requires thoughtful evaluation of each case.

#### Punishment

In the preceding sections of this chapter, stress has been placed upon a positive concept of discipline; one that precludes the necessity of punishment by eliminating the offense. Careful and thorough indoctrination of the recruit, sound job classification and placement, leadership and command attention, and recreation programs have the common goal of removing at source the more prevalent causes of unauthorized absenteeism. The case studies already presented suggest that the great majority of absenteeism could have been prevented. The evidence also is clear that those commands in which morale is high have a relatively minor problem in this respect. However, absenteeism still accounts for about half of all offenses coming to the attention of Commanding Officers at mast, and about three-quarters of all courts-martial are awarded for offenses concerned therewith.

Long experience appears to substantiate the soundness of certain basic principles of punishment. Hobbs<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ira E. Hobbs, Capt., USN, "Motivation of Enlisted Personnel in the U.S. Navy. Unpublished master's thesis, Stanford University, October 1947, p. 45-50.

summarizes some of the important ones as follows:

1. It is the certainty and not the severity of punishment that makes it an important factor in maintaining discipline. Severity of punishment can be shown by historical example to be a poor deterrent to crime if there is a chance of avoiding punishment. . . . When men can weigh the fruits of violations against the chance of being punished, discipline is at its poorest.
2. . . . Punishment must be impartially administered to each individual. . . Not only should personal sentiment be eliminated in dealing out punishment, but also an effort should be made to eliminate variations of punishment for the same offense which arise because of lack of knowledge on the part of officers.
3. Punishment should be administered as soon as practicable after the offense is committed. Delay is detrimental to morale because it causes uncertainty and worry to the offender. . . and causes resentment toward the entire system.
4. . . . It is the system and not the individual punishing the offender. Men should be made to understand that they are playing under certain rules of the game, and if they violate these rules they will be punished by an impartial referee. An offender should never be made to feel that he is being punished by an individual, nor that anger has entered into the punishment.
5. Punishment once administered should be forgotten. . . The value of punishment lies in encouraging the individual to avoid repetition of the offense, not in branding him as a chronic recalcitrant.
6. The loss of individual status is possibly the most severe punishment that can be inflicted. . . Great care should be used when administering discipline which has the tendency to destroy an individual's status with his shipmates. Frequently this type of punishment does more harm than good, since it leaves the man with no other alternative than to be a disciplinary problem in order to gain recognition as such, to replace his loss in creditable reputation.

In order to promote consistency in the handling of unauthorized absence offenses, the Secretary of the Navy has for many years published to the Naval Service advisory

standards of punishment. The keynote has been to accord leniency to first offenders whose absence is not unduly protracted and to increase the penalties progressively with the number of previous offenses and the duration of the offense in question. In some of the larger commands, these standards have been published in tabulated form and are closely adhered to in all but the most unusual circumstances. Such a procedure combines the advantages of consistency and certainty of punishment and removes any incentive to remain overleave on the grounds that punishment will be no more severe for a protracted absence as for a short one.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

1. The seriousness of unauthorized absence as a disciplinary problem to the Navy is indicated by the fact that over 38,000 courts-martial were held in 1949 for this offense alone. This number is roughly ten percent of the average enlisted strength of the entire Navy during that year.
2. Three-quarters of all Navy courts-martial in 1949 concerned themselves with unauthorized absence offenses alone.
3. Of the activities sampled, the Naval Air Stations and aircraft squadrons had the lowest absentee rates and a Receiving Station the highest. A major combatant ship had a lower rate than any of seven destroyers.
4. Absenteeism appeared to be more prevalent during the summer months than in wintertime.
5. Men of lower intelligence, as measured by the Navy General Classification Test, and men of limited education, contributed a higher proportion of offenses than did men of above-average intelligence and education.
6. "Boyish irresponsibility" was evident in relatively few cases. While twenty was the most frequent age, one-half of all offenders were over twenty-one.

7. Lack of naval experience did not appear to be an important factor. Although the greatest number of offenses were committed by men in their second year of service, one-half of all offenders had served longer than two years and ten months.
8. Seventy-eight percent of all offenders were non-rated men, and fifty-three percent were in pay grade E-3 alone.
9. Only thirty-four percent of the offenders in this study had previously clear records.
10. A very high proportion of offenders were "broken-service" men -- thirty-nine percent.
11. Negroes did not contribute a disproportionate number of the particular sort of absence offenses with which this study was concerned. However, a very large number of short overleaves by negro personnel was reported at a Naval Barracks having fifty-five percent negroes.
12. There appeared to be both a surface reason or reasons and an underlying cause of each offense. The former was considered quite unreliable in most cases; often little more than a rationalization by the offender himself.
13. Family background and early home training appeared to have an important influence on the emotional maturity and the degree of adjustment made by the individual to life in the service.
14. The younger enlisted men now in the Navy passed through their adolescence during the war years, often growing up in relatively unsupervised environments.

15. There appeared to be positive correlation between truancy in school and absenteeism in the Navy.
16. Studies by the Corrective Services Branch of the Bureau of Naval Personnel in 1948 indicated that 62 percent of overleave offenders thought that their officers had taken little or no interest in the personal problems of their men.
17. The great majority of overleave offenders admitted little or no pride of unit or sense of attachment to ship or station.
18. Naval psychiatrists have advanced two basic formulations to explain why men go overleave:
  - (a) an anxiety reaction to frustrations of various sorts.
  - (b) deficiencies in the personality of the offender, including emotional immaturity, egocentrism, and an antagonism to authority.

#### Conclusions and Recommendation

Because the problem is so vast and so diversified, there is no simple or final answer to finding ways to prevent unauthorized absenteeism. Within broad limits, however, it becomes apparent that a great deal of absenteeism in the Navy is preventable, because it involves very few problems that any good division officer cannot handle provided he is willing to devote the time and effort that an intelligent handling of his men's problems requires. Primarily, then, the solution lies in the areas of better

leadership and command attention, notably at its weakest links, the division officer and the leading petty officer. It is thought that division officers who know their men and display an intelligent concern for their welfare and their problems probably encounter lower overleave rates than those who are indifferent to these problems.

Selective recruiting is an effective but not always a practicable means of reducing unauthorized absenteeism. Every effort should be made to screen out those applicants having neuropsychiatric disorders and those who are emotionally immature. Moreover, because the peacetime petty officer becomes the wartime commissioned officer, selective recruiting serves the double purpose of obtaining better petty officer material as well as eliminating those types of men who are more likely to commit overleave offenses.

Good initial indoctrination is most important in facilitating the adjustment of the recruit to life in the service. To the boy away from home for the first time the Navy becomes a father-substitute, but the tempering process takes time. Present recruit-training methods appear to be excellent, but the process can well be continued on a formalized basis on board the individual's first ship or duty station.

The patterned interview is believed to offer an effective way for division officers to get to know their men. Attention must be focused upon the youngest, the

least intelligent and least-well educated men, because they are the ones who are least able to solve their own problems.

Recreation is important in combatting absenteeism because it seeks to furnish wholesome means of utilizing leisure time.

Continued attention should be given to the separating by administrative rather than disciplinary measures those men who are clearly misfits, and upon whom punishment will have no corrective effect. This should be confined only to those cases where no criminality is involved.

Punishment is a last resort in preventing unauthorized absenteeism. It serves both as a corrective measure to the offender and as a deterrent to himself and to others. It must be certain, prompt and impartially administered.

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## APPENDIX A

### UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Command \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ 1950

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Rating \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ G.C.T. score \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of absence \_\_\_\_\_ days \_\_\_\_\_ hrs. Apprehended? \_\_\_\_\_ Surrendered? \_\_\_\_\_

Absent over: liberty? \_\_\_\_\_ leave? \_\_\_\_\_ without leave? \_\_\_\_\_

Straggler from another command? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_. If yes, name command \_\_\_\_\_

Previous unauthorized absence offenses (this enlistment): 1 2 3 4 or more

Other offenses (except unauthorized absence) 1 2 3 4 or more

Nature of present duties of offender \_\_\_\_\_

Length of naval service: \_\_\_\_\_ yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ mos. Continuous? \_\_\_\_\_ Broken? \_\_\_\_\_

Is offender serving in his first enlistment? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## II

Instructions: After careful evaluation of this man's case, please indicate by a single check mark your considered judgment as to the actual reason for this unauthorized absence.

### I. Personal emergency

Domestic or marital troubles

Death or illness in immediate family

Complaints or bad news from home

Financial difficulties (except insufficient funds to return from leave)

Matters of urgent personal arrangement (describe briefly):

Other (describe briefly):

### II. Misconduct while on leave or liberty

Arrest and conviction by civil authorities

Overindulgence in liquor

Bad company

Other (describe briefly):

III. Negative motivation

Dislike for the service

Dislike for present station

Dislike for present duties

Failure to get expected rate or desired duty

Resentment of punishment or administrative action

Other (describe briefly):

IV. Faulty administrative practices or poor leadership

Inequitable opportunity for leave or liberty

Unfamiliarity with procedure of requesting leave or liberty

Unsympathetic handling of leave request by immediate superior  
(leading petty officer or division officer)

Other (describe briefly):

V. Inaptitude for the service

Chronic seasickness

Homesickness

Gross immaturity

Gross irresponsibility

Personality disorder (describe briefly):

Other (describe briefly):

VI. Miscellaneous

Poor planning or foresight in returning from leave

Protracted overstaying of short overleave on grounds that punishment will not be appreciably greater

Chronic alcoholism

Deliberately missing ship

Other (describe briefly):

III

Instructions: Please answer the following questions as objectively as you can. Their purpose is to evaluate a few of the more prevalent underlying causes for unauthorized absenteeism.

1. Do you consider the leadership of this man's immediate superiors (Division Officer or leading petty officer) to be:  
Excellent    Average    Poor    Insufficient observation   

2. Within the command, what is this man's reputation as a worker?  
Excellent    Average    Poor    Insufficient observation   

3. Do you consider that serious lack of home training is an important contributing factor in this case?  
Yes    No    Undecided

4. Do you consider that inadequate naval indoctrination in recruit training is an important contributing factor in this case?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Undecided \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are there any other circumstances which have a bearing on this case?  
If so, please describe them briefly:

Evaluated by: \_\_\_\_\_ U.S.N.

## APPENDIX B

### ABSENTEE STUDY

1. Introduction: This study was conducted by the Corrective Service Branch Bureau of Naval Personnel, in cooperation with the Research Division in November 1948.

2. Method: A questionnaire was prepared consisting of thirty-six questions. It was designed to determine some of the principle causes of absenteeism. Questionnaires were sent to each of the Disciplinary Barracks and Retraining Commands and administered to a total of 500 general court-martial prisoners who were serving sentences for offences, the principle charge of which involved absenteeism. Explicit instructions were issued for the administration of the questionnaire to insure as uniform procedures as possible. Final data was correlated and compiled in the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

#### 3. Findings of Fact:

##### A. As to Number Completed:

1. 500 sent out - 500 returned  
150 each U.S. Disciplinary Barracks,  
Portsmouth and San Pedro.  
100 each U.S. Retraining Command  
Norfolk and Mare Island.

##### B. As to Characteristics of Men Completing the Questionnaire:

1. All were General Court-Martial Prisoners serving sentence for absence offences.
2. Length of Service - Average 47.3 months.
3. First Enlistment - 60 %.
4. Wartime Draftees - 13 %.
5. Pay Grades Represented - Only 25 % above 5th pay grade.  
57 % in 5th and 6th pay grade.

##### 6. Amount of Schooling (as reported by prisoner):

Did Not finish 8th Grade	19 %.
Did Not finish H.S.	65 %.
Graduated H.S.	10 %.
Some College	3 %.

## 7. GOF Score (as reported by prisoner):

Below 50	- 19 %.
50 and above	- 16 %.

## 8. Attitude Toward School:

Liked school about same as others in the school	71 %.
Liked school better than others in the school	52 %.
Liked it a lot less than most in the school	47 %.

## 9. Amount of Truancy - Never played hooky - 29 %.

More than most	- 6 %.
About same as others	- 33 %.

## 10. Mental Attitude - How does your physical condition compare with others your age?

About same	- 65 %.
A lot worse	- 2 %.
Better	- 22 %.

## What personal problems worries you most:

Family problems (parents)	- 34 %.
Marital (wife & children)	- 20 %.
Future after Navy	- 16 %.

## How serious do you think your personal problems are:

More serious than most peoples	- 35 %.
Lot less serious	- 10 %.

## Are you ever worried or upset:

Sometimes	- 53 %.
Hardly ever	- 19 %.
Quite often	- 28 %.

## Were you worried at your last ship or station:

Sometimes	- 41 %.
Hardly ever	- 26 %.
Quite often	- 33 %.

## How much did it bother you when you were ordered to do things which you don't see a good reason for doing:

A lot	- 24 %.
A little	- 42 %.
Not at all	- 34 %.

## 6. As to Last Ship or Station:

## 1. Length of Duty - Under six months 57 %.

One year or over	22 %.
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2. How would you say the ship spirit was in your last ship or station: - Very good 19 %.  
Good or fairly good 49 %.  
Very poor 13 %.

3. How did you like your last ship or station:  
Liked it 34 %.  
Did not like it 41 %.  
Just average 25 %.

Note: 24 men or 4 % of those answering the question gave dislike of ship or station as reason they committed offense.

D. As to Leave and Liberty:

1. Fairness of amount granted:

Fair share of both leave and liberty - 41 %.  
Fair share of liberty but not leave - 39 %.  
Not fair share of either - 16 %.

2. Amount leave due you when offense committed:

All used up - 13 %.  
Over 30 days - 22 %.  
Under 30 days - 55 %.

3. Amount used since 1 July: None - 57 %.  
Over 30 - 5 %.

4. How long since last authorized leave when offense committed:

Less than 30 days - 13 %.  
Over one year - 22 %.  
Less than 3 months - 41 %.

E. As to Absence Offenses:

1. Last unauthorized absence prior to present offense:

Less than one month - 21 %.  
Over one year - 18 %.  
Less than 3 months - 41 %.

2. Frequency of offenses: First offense - 25 %.  
Once before - 32 %.  
More than once - 40 %.

3. Total number of absence offenses: 496 men replying to the questionnaire represented a total of 1,247 offenses, or over 2½ per man.

F. As to Present Offense:

## 1. Status when last offense committed:

On authorized liberty	- 60 %.
On authorized leave	- 15 %.
On emergency leave	- 3 %.
Without leave or liberty	- 20 %.
Other	- 2 %.

## 2. If on authorized leave:

Number of days requested	15 (average)
Number of days granted	15 (average)
How many days used up when you knew you wouldn't be back	15 (average)
Did not ask for extension	50 %.

## 3. If on liberty when last offense committed:

Number of hours requested	40 (average)
Number of hours granted	29 (average)
How many hours used up when you knew you wouldn't be back	25 (average)

## 4. If on emergency leave:

Number of days requested	24 (average)
Number of days granted	16 (average)
How many days used up when you knew you couldn't get back	22 days

G. As to Leave Without Authority:

1. 20 % of total committed last offense by going AWOL.
2. 55 % asked for leave before going AWOL but were denied.
3. 44 % asked for regular leave, 32 % for emergency leave and 24 % for liberty.
4. 64 % did not ask for leave in writing.
5. To Whom Applied: The total number of 196 men answering this question talked with a total of 263 individuals in regard to their leave request.

Note: Listed below are the officials to whom request was made, listed in accordance with the highest person in authority to whom the request was made:

Commanding Officer	- 33 %.
Executive Officer	- 25 %.
Division Officer	- 13 %.
Chaplain	- 8 %.
Company Commander	- 8 %.
Leave Yeoman	- 4 %.
Other	- 9 %.

6. Reason given for denial: No reason given	- 36 %.
Could not be spared	- 29 %.
No leave due	- 6 %.
Request not justified	- 10 %.
Other	- 19 %.

H. As to Job Placement:

1. Navy did very good job of placement - 25 %
2. Navy did very poor job of placement - 30 %.
3. Importance of job assignment at time of offense - Important work - 53 %.

I. As to Interest of Officers:

1. Most officers were interested in personnel affairs of men under them - 24 %.
2. About half and half - 14 %.
3. Most not interested - 62 %.

J. As to Reasons Last Offense Was Committed:

1. Total number of reasons: The 464 men replying to this question gave a total of 538 reasons. Chief reasons given were broken down into following categories:
 

Dissatisfaction with the Naval Service	- 34 %.
Personal reasons (family & Marital)	- 49 %.
Civilian arrest	- 1 %.
No reason	- 3 %.
Other	- 9 %.

K. As to Reasons for Dissatisfaction:

1. 184 men answered this question which gave them a chance to say anything they wished about their Navy experience. Summarized, these can be broken down into the following categories:
  - a. Complaints regarding officer's attitudes and indifference to

personal problems	- 20%
b. Complaints regarding immaturity and type of leadership given by petty officers	- 4%
c. Dissatisfaction with type or place of duty	- 11%
d. Dissatisfaction with present sentence or trial	- 29%
e. General dislike of the Navy (not specific)	- 20%
f. Other	- 22%
g. Navy is all right	- 7%

## APPENDIX C

### CHECK LIST FOR INTERVIEW

#### Preparation

1. Look over the man's service record.
  - a. How long has he been in the Navy?
  - b. Previous service? War service?
  - c. How old is he?
  - d. How much education has he had?
  - e. Where does he come from?
  - f. Is he married? How many children?
  - g. What jobs, if any, has he held before entering the Navy?
  - h. Is he a service school graduate?
  - i. What is his reputation with his immediate enlisted superior (section leader, divisional petty officer, etc.)?

#### Interview

2. Be sure to mention early in the interview that you have wanted for some time to talk with him personally about how he is getting along.
3. How is he getting along in his present assignment?
4. What are his plans for his naval career?
  - a. Is he "striking" for a rate?
  - b. Has he completed the training course for next higher rating?
  - c. If a "short-timer", what is his attitude toward re-enlisting?
5. Does he understand the procedure for making special requests for leave, special liberty, or any other legitimate matter?
6. Does he have any family problems?
  - a. Does he have an allotment for support of his family, and does his family receive the allotment regularly and on time?
  - b. Do they need any other help?
  - c. If so, does he, and do they, know about assistance available through Navy Relief, Red Cross, etc.?
7. Does he know that he can come to you (or one of your junior officers) if he needs help or advice in the future?